

Sādhu Sādhu!
A Life of Tinkadī Bābā

by

Binod Bihari Das Bābājī

translated by
Neal Delmonico
(Nitai Das)

December 6, 2007



Contents

Publisher’s Foreword	v
Author’s Introduction	vii
Early Life	1
Pilgrimage to Holy Sites	11
Second Marriage	17
Intense Practice in Vṛndāvana	25
Prabhupāda’s Final Days	41
 I Prabhupāda’s Sweet Nature	55
Various Supernatural Incidents and Traits	57
A Miraculous Event	57
Protecting with His Subtle Body	58
Acquiring by Wish Alone	60
An Unprecedented Incident	60

Curing Disease by Compassionate Glance	61
Grace Through Dreams	61
Ability to Know Things From Far	62
Knowing Mental States by His Supernatural Power	62
Kṛṣṇa's Qualities in His <i>Bhakta</i>	64
Compassion	65
Compassionate Salvation from the Wombs of Ghosts	67
Not Harmful of Others	69
Essence of Truth	70
Equable	70
Nonviolence of Living Beings Towards Prabhupāda	71
Without Faults	73
Generosity	77
Softheartedness	77
Purity	78
Being Without Possessions	78
Offering Help To All	78
Peacefulness	79
Without Lust	79
Indifference	79
Steadiness	80
Conquered the Six Bad Traits	80
Moderation in Eating	82
Without Frenzy	82
Humility	82
Taciturn	83
Compassion	83

<i>Contents</i>	iii
Friendliness	84
Poetic	84
Expert	84
Silent	84
The Actual True Guru (<i>Sad-guru</i>)	84
Guileless Behavior like a Child	85
Free of Modern Ways of Thinking	86
Vigilant Observation Even Though Unmanifest	87
II Prabhupāda's Sūcaka Kīrtanas	89
Kīrtana One (Binode Bihari Dāsa Bābā's)	91
A Introduction to the Author	99
His Other Book	102
B My Recollections — Joseph Knapp	103
C My Recollections — Mark Tinghino	113

Publisher's Foreward

It is with great happiness and joy that we are able to offer another wonderful book to the public, translated by Dr. Delmonico. And being the life of our most Blessed Gurudev it is of special significance and blessing not only for students of our particular rasik path but also for all people of the world. Reading about the lives of saints is important in many spiritual and religious traditions. It helps us to open our eyes, minds and hearts to new possibilities. As we read and think about the saints, we become inspired spiritually, imbibing a little of the grace of their attainment through this process of loving remembrance. In reading about their lives we also find instruction and consolation on the path. How did they attain the goal? What did they go through; what did they sacrifice on the way? What advice do they leave us with?

The great Vaishnav saint presented here represents one of the last of his kind, perhaps the last of his era, for, as anyone can see, modernity is such that it cannot now hardly be escaped. With the influx of so much wealth into the country of India and the resultant (so-called) improvement of life with piped water, windows, newer and faster cars and motorcycles, more modernized hospitals, and more and more wealthy people wanting entrance into heaven or an even more affluent life while here on earth. Thus, they give more and more wealth to the *sādhus* and saints in the hope of accruing their blessings. It is a miracle that we are left with any sanity at all. The noise, the pollution, the hustle and bustle and finally, yes, the competition. With the stakes higher now we see a lot of competition for students—the equation being that more students equals the more power and wealth and therefore more prestige. It has even reached the point that some so-called holy people, self-proclaimed gurus and god-men, however well established they may be, now steal (or try to) ashrams (monasteries), money, followers, land, etc. from oth-

ers.

The above might sound astounding to many who read this: what? In the Holy Land of India!? How can this happen there? The answer, however distasteful, is that it has been happening there for hundreds of years—yet the level of audacity is now seems unmistakable. With the dynamic increase of land prices that has scoured the whole world, the stakes get higher and greed comes into play. No doubt it is a sad situation, but we are on the earth live in a time that is not nurturing to any form of life including the human life! There has never been a time on earth, at least in recorded history, free of strife, free of greed, free of dishonesty perpetrated on others. Since this is so and there does not seem to be much we can do about it, perhaps we should look instead into our own psyches, our own characters, and try to work on ourselves and become as much as we are able living examples of wisdom, truth, devotion, compassion, joy and loving kindness. That is the subject of this book!

So let us dive deep into stories of the lives of the saints and especially into the life of this particular saint with whom some people in our midst have lived and whom they have served personally. This is a translation of a collection of biographical details from the life of Śrīmān Tin Kudi Gosvāmī by only one of his disciples, Śrī Binod Bihari Das Bābā. Therefore, we have added some ‘extras’ in the form of our own reminiscences of times spent in the presence of our blessed Gurudev for you to enjoy and perhaps find the seed of something very deep. May that indescribable seed be planted in your hearts, where, it is our hope, it will sprout, grow, flower, and fructify, filling in your lives with sweetness.

*gurur brahmā gurur viṣṇur gurur devo maheśvarah
gurur sākṣat parabrahma tasmai śrīgurave namah*

Jagadish Das
June 14, 2007
Gokula Dhāma,
Kirksville, Missouri

Author's Introduction

Early Life

Jaya Śrī Gurudeva!

Victory to the Blessed Guru!

Nearly thirty years ago¹ at a place named Adibadri in Vraja a practitioner (*sādhaka*) was sitting, leaning against the wall of a small room near a temple. He had matted hair and his body was well-shaped. While he was submerging his mind in thinking of *yugala-kiśora* (the youthful couple, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa) it seemed as if he sometimes began to get drowsy. Suddenly, his drowsiness broke and he began to chastise himself for it. One could not tell how late it was. There was no way of telling what time it was. It seemed to be after midnight. The practitioner with shuffling steps went out of the room. Then observing the positions of the stars in the clear sky, he tried to determine the time. He decided to take his bath and then sit down again for private worship (*bhajana*). In front of him was dense forest. As soon as the sadhak took hold of a water pot and stepped forward, he noticed two blazing eyes splitting the dark night in front of him. They were just like two bright stars! It was probably some ferocious forest animal. The animal was not standing very far away. The practitioner fixed his gaze on the animal and tried to determine what kind of animal it was. In that condition, the practitioner was unable to determine what it was and remained standing there, unsure of what to do. Thinking that valuable time was being wasted, the practitioner became restless. Then, in order to scare the animal, he shook his pot and made a sound like “hūsh hūsh,” The creature, not being even slightly frightened, remained standing just as it was before. After spending sometime in this impasse, the animal jumped across in front

¹The book was written in 1987.

of the practitioner and quickly disappeared into the forest. At that moment he saw stripes on the body of the animal. The practitioner realized then that it had been a tiger!

Who was that practitioner whom a ferocious tiger that was standing just in front of him gave up as food and went away? Who was that practitioner who though seeing death in the form of a hungry tiger standing before him did not feel any fear whatsoever. That practitioner had attained such a treasure that even a ferocious tiger forgot his ferociousness. He had attained such a state of fearlessness that even when confronted with a ferocious tiger he was unperturbed.

He was known in Vraja and among those born in Vraja, who thought of him as one of their very own, as Tin Kādi Baba or Mauni Baba.

There is a village named Manoharpur in the Ghāṭāl Mahakumār part of the district of Medinipur in West Bengal. Its qualities are just like its name—mind-enchanting. Truly, the beauty of that village steals everyone's hearts. Nature adorned that village in an expert way with many kinds of trees, flowers, and ponds. Therefore, perhaps, the village was named Manoharpur.

Several generations of people in the lineage of Mother Jāhnavā Thā-kurāṇī, the non-different power of Nityananda Prabhu, spent their lives in this village. Śrī Śrī 108 Prabhupāda Tinkadi Goswami was born in that village. His father's name was Harimohan Goswami and his mother's name was Suradhuni Devi.

It was the full moon day of Māgha in Bengali year 1313 [1907 c.e.]. In all directions *saṅkīrtana* of the holy names and other auspicious rites were being performed. The house of Harimohan Goswami was also filled with the joy of *saṅkīrtana* of the holy names. In the house were sacred images named Gaura and Balarāma that were nearly five hundred years old. In the courtyard of the temple the *saṅkīrtana* of the names of Hari was in progress. Many Vaiṣṇavas too made auspicious appearances at the house of Harimohan Goswami. On such an auspicious day, at an auspicious time, a male child was born, lighting up the lap of Suradhuni Devi, wife of Harimohan Goswami. Harimohan Goswami's joy knew no bounds. With great joy he began to serve the Vaiṣṇavas.

That was Suradhuni Devi's eighth child. Before him six sons and one daughter had died. In the birth house the mid-wife cut the child's umbilical cord and took him on her lap. Then she said: "this son is mine." Suradhuni Devi gave the mid-wife three cowries (*tin kādi*) and

bought her son. Therefore, the son became hers and the son's name became Tinkađi.

Harimohan Gosvami named his son Kiśorī-kiśorānanda. He was a very beautiful baby. Gradually, little-by-little, he learned to walk. He was very mischievous. At the slightest inattentiveness of his mother the child scattered and broke pots and lamps and drove his mother to distraction. From time to time his mother became upset at the misbehavior of her child and would tie him up. All of the neighbors in the area loved that child. With or without cause the neighboring mothers would come and caress the child.

In this way five years passed. By the rule of fate, suddenly, one day darkness descended on the house of Harimohan Goswami. After only a few days of illness Suradhuni Devi passed away. At the loss of his wife Harimohan Gosvami was deeply troubled. Above all, the biggest problem was who will now take care of his child. Many recommended to the Gosvami that he marry a second time, but he was not at all in agreement with the idea of marring a second time. He owned a little bit of land, but with that it was not possible to maintain his household. From time to time he had to visit the households of his disciples. From what little he received as gifts from them he ran his household. In this situation who would take care of his child?

Thereupon, Harimohan Goswami began to worry about finding some way to solve the problem. One of his distant cousins was extremely affectionate towards the Goswami's son. Seeing the Goswami so worried she said to him: "Why are you worrying? I will take care of your child. Give your child over to me. From today you should think that this child is mine not yours." Hearing these words, Goswami became completely free from worry. He said: "You've done a good thing, sister. You have saved me; from today this child is yours!" From that time on the Dhāi Mā (wet nurse) began to raise Tinkađi.

That child only five years of age was the very life of Dhāi Mā. Her house was four or five miles away from Manoharpur in a town called Rājīcak. In order to take care of the lad Tinkađi, she had to move to Manoharpur. Harimohan Goswami was generally visiting his disciples' houses. After ten days, after fifteen days and sometimes after a month he would return to the house. Goswamiji handed the care of his son to Dhāi Mā and was able to go back and forth to and from his disciples' houses without worry.

The boy was very capricious. If he wasn't watched every minute he would disappear somewhere. When Dhāi Mā did not see the boy, she became agitated and searched for him. After much searching, she would catch him and bring him back. She always and in all places had to watch him, otherwise where this mischievous boy was and what he was doing was difficult to keep track of. For Dhāi Mā it was an extraordinary responsibility. If one did not give him whatever he wanted whenever he wanted it he would cry, roll around in the dirt on the ground, and make a big fuss. It was a good deal of trouble for Dhāi Mā. In this way, through her care and his father's affection the boy Tinkadi was raised.

In time, chalk was placed in his hand for his education, and he was enrolled in school. But it was a great problem sending him to school for he did not at all want to go to school. How much caressing and begging was necessary to send Tinkadi to school. In the evening Dhāi Mā would sit and teach the boy. The boy learned to read very quickly, but he still did not want to study at all. With much caressing Dhāi Mā read to him repeatedly many kinds of stories and made him practice reading. How many times after sitting down to study did he say "I'm hungry! I'm tired!" and so forth. In this way the education of the boy Tinkadi progressed.

As much as his age increased, the boy's capriciousness also increased. All the time it was only play and more play. If he even heard the word "study" it was as if the sky had broken and fallen on his head. Getting him to study at school was a huge problem. Just before it was time to go to school the boy would disappear. His foster mother becoming anxious would search for him at this house and that house and bring him back. After that, so much caressing and begging was required to get him to go to school. Some days she wasn't able to find Tinkadi at all. After the time for school had passed he would show up. One day just before it was time to go to school the boy disappeared. Dhāi Mā after much searching returned to the house without finding him. At that moment she happened to glance up at a tree and saw that Tinkadi had climbed the tree and was sitting there. After a great deal of Dhāi Mā's begging he felt sorry for her and came down from the tree. Another day she was again unable to find Tinkadi when it was time to go to school. After that Dhāi Mā went to take care of some work in the house and found him hiding under the bed.

In this way Tinkadi gradually became older. After a while the time for his brahminical initiation (*upanayana*) arrived. When Tinkadi was

about the age of nine, Harimohan Goswami performed the sacrament of *brāhmaṇa* initiation and gave him [Vaiṣṇava] mantra initiation (*dīksā*) as well. When the day of the initiation arrived there occurred an amazing transformation in Tinkadi. When his head had been shaved and he had put on the saffron cloth, an amazing, profound state of feeling was noticeable in him. Nearly all of the Vaiṣṇavas who had come inferred that this boy is not an ordinary boy. Through him many blessings will come to the world. They all gave him their blessings from the core of their heart. Saying to Dhāimā: “[Please give] alms, Mother!” he accepted his first alms from her.

After his initiation Tinkadi’s capriciousness for the most part diminished. Every day in the morning he wanted to read one chapter of the *Gītā*. It was as if the *Gītā* was his life. When it was time to go to school he would talk a copy of the *Gītā* with him. At school when it was time to practice reading he would read the *Gītā* instead of the other books. At the time he showed a special attraction for *saikīrtana* of the holy names, too. Everyday he wanted to perform *kīrtana* in the evening in front of the Gaura and Balarama images established in his house. When *kīrtana* was being performed, from time to time special emotional states were seen in the boy Tinkadi.

Gradually Tinkadi left boyhood behind and entered his teenage years. In his teenage years, his body developed in an amazing way. His eyes became inclined, his chest defined, and a special beauty appeared on all of his limbs with the fresh arrival of youth. His speaking expressions and ability to speak were also amazing. He used to please everyone with his use of very beautiful expressions. During this period since he had become so competent in learning his education was completed.

His father Harimohan Goswami became concerned about his son’s future. They owned a little bit of land, but it was not enough to support a family on. Therefore the Goswami thought that if he introduced his son among some of his disciples, in the future he would be able to support himself in the profession of teaching. Thinking in this way, he began to take his son with him to the houses of his disciples. Just taking him to the houses of disciples was not enough. He also needed to have some knowledge of scripture. If one just becomes a guru it will not work. Therefore, Harimohan Goswami began to teach his son the *Bhāgavata*, the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* and so forth. His son had no enthusiasm for study in general, but for the study of all those texts on *bhakti* he was extremely enthusiastic. Gradually, following

the system the family gurus, he began to have a few disciples. When he was at home Prabhupāda Tinkadi Goswami would recite every day the *Bhāgavata*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and other *bhakti* texts in front of the sacred images Śrī Gaura and Balarāma. From time to time he would go with his father and sometimes alone to the houses of disciples.

Gradually, Prabhupāda Tinkadi Goswami turned into a young man. His father Harimohan Goswami then began to worry about his son's marriage. He received information about a young lady with all the right qualities. In a village near Manoharpur named Khāñjapur lived Gopīnāth Goswami. He had a seven year old daughter named Śītalā Sundarī. Her nature and her figure were very beautiful. Her father, too, had begun to worry about finding his daughter a good match. Harimohan Goswami one day made the proposal to Gopīnāth Goswami. Gopīnāth Goswami could not control his joy. He, too, in his mind had nourished the wish to offer his daughter to Tinkadi Goswami. He joyfully accepted the proposal of Harimohan Goswami. On an auspicious day, in an auspicious hour, the marriage of Prabhupāda Tinkadi Goswami with Śītalā Sundarī, the daughter of Gopīnāth Goswami of Khāñjapur, was performed. Gopīnāth Goswami with tears in his eyes sent his daughter to the house of her father-in-law.

In the village of Manoharpur at the house of Harimohan Goswami, the new bride's arrival was auspicious. Everyone's joy knew no limits. Seeing the young, capricious girl-bride Harimohan Goswami was lost in joy. In this way, in the midst of so much joy a year passed. Suddenly, by the laws of fate, on to this golden household fell the shadow of great sadness. Prabhupāda's father, after only a few days of illness, left his perishable body and set out for the eternal sport. Prabhupāda was then only sixteen years of age. Without his father, without his mother, Prabhupāda's heart was stricken with sadness. He felt himself completely helpless. All his neighbors began to console him. Gradually, Prabhupāda regained his mental strength and began to take care of the responsibilities of the household. In this way, a few years passed in the midst of a mental state burdened with sadness.

Though indeed Prabhupāda Tinkadi Goswami began to pass his married life in this way, still day after day it began to seem as if his mind had disappeared somewhere in thoughts of the higher truths. Prabhupāda had heard when he was a child "Churning curds in the early morning makes the butter come out good. Worship of Kṛṣṇa when one is young brings success when one grows old." This saying began to disturb his

mind again and again. The most valuable time of his life was passing by. If worship of Kṛṣṇa does not happen now, when will it? As more days go, by bondage to worldly life will increase. If someone waits, sitting on the shore of the sea thinking: "when the waves of the sea calm down I will take my bath," one is not likely to ever get his bath. In the same way, if someone waits thinking: "when the waves of the troubles of worldly life become calm I will worship Kṛṣṇa," then one's worship will not likely ever happen. In such thoughts joys of worldly life began lessen for Prabhupāda and his passion for worship began to increase.

At that time Prabhupāda was very fashionable. He always wore dhotis and kurtas of the finest cotton. He never wore ordinary or soiled clothes. He also used to smoke then. In order to smoke he used to use a very beautiful hookah and along with it the finest tobacco from Vishnupur. When he had to go somewhere he would not forget to take his hookah and the Vishnupur tobacco with him. When going to a disciple's house he used to take a *brāhmaṇa* cook with him. When going from one village to another his disciples used to take Prabhupāda in a palanquin.

After passing a few years in this manner a son was born lighting up the lap of his wife Śītalā Sundarī. The birth of a son is a matter for Prabhupāda's joy. But in his heart there was no joy. It was as if the joy had disappeared somewhere. He began to think that the most valuable time of his life was passing and that his bondage to worldly life was increasing day by day. When will I offer my body, mind, and life-breath to the lotus feet of Śrī Govinda and wholeheartedly do private worship (*bhajana*)? This kind of thought began to lessen his joy in worldly life. From time to time he began to visit Navadvīpa and Nilācala.

At that time there was an uncontrollable desire in his heart. He thought: "I have made many disciples, but if I am to explain scripture a little knowledge of Sanskrit is necessary. Thinking in this way, he began for some time to study with some *pāṇḍita* in Navadvīpa. But thinking about his household life and abut the Lord created interferences in his study. His studying never happened again. He returned to Manoharpur. On account of responsibilites, he remained in household life, but his mind again and again ran away to Vṛndāvana. It was as if some invisible power was beckoning him. Because of the uncontrollable force of his mind one day, without telling anyone, he actually started out for Vṛndāvana.

After reaching Vṛndāvana his joy knew no limits when he saw the places where Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sports occurred. After visiting those places he

practically forgot all about his home and determining that he wanted to live permanently in Vraja, he began to pray to the feet of compassionate Śrī Rādhārāṇī: "O Compassionate Kisorī, don't throw me back into the dark well of worldly life. Mistress, don't allow me to go from Vraja to any other place." While praying in this way he arrived at Mount Govardhana. There he heard from people that at Govindakuṇḍa lived a perfected great-soul (*siddha-mahātmā*). His name was Śrī Śrī 108 Manohara Dās Bābājī Mahārāj. Prabhupāda with great excitement and with very little delay went running to Govindakuṇḍa wishing to see the perfected *bābā*.

The perfected *bābā* when he saw Prabhupāda offered him a full eight-limbed, stick-like prostration. Prabhupāda was completely unprepared for that and objected. The perfected *bābā* said: "Why not? You are a descendant of the great teachers (*ācārya*). You are a world-guru. If I should not offer obeisance to you, who should I offer it to?" After that the perfected *bābā* with great respect offered him a seat and made arrangements for his stay. One day Prabhupāda asked him: "Mahārāja, what must one do to attain *bhakti*?" The perfected *bābā* replied with astonishment: "What kind of question is that? *Bhakti* is one of your household items and you are asking: how does one get *bhakti*?" After that after spending a few days in many question and answer discussions of worship (*bhajana*), Prabhupāda informed the *bābā* of his wish not to return to his house any more. In response, the perfected *bābā* said: "What kind of talk is that? Haven't you nourished the desire to become a big scholar?" At this statement of the *bābā*, Prabhupāda was particularly surprised and he began to wonder how the perfected *bābā* knew his inner desires. Because of that incident his faith in the perfected *bābā* became even more strong. Then the perfected *bābā* gave Prabhupāda an order: "Return to your house. This is not your time. You still have much work to do yet. Through you many things beneficial to the world will come to pass. When the time is right your desire to live in Vṛndāvana will be fulfilled." Prabhupāda with a pained heart remained silent for a little while and then said: "But I have no money for a ticket. How will I go?" The perfected *bābā* said: "Don't worry. You go to Vṛndāvana. Ticket money has been sent from home for you there." Prabhupāda had no other recourse; he left Govindakuṇḍa at the order of the perfected *bābā* and went to the house of relative he knew in Vṛndāvana. There he heard that indeed a money order had arrived from home for his return trip. Prabhupāda took the money and started towards home.

Though Prabhupāda had returned to his house, his detachment from household life began gradually to increase. He had one son whom he named Vṛndāvana[candra]. When the child was only three months old, Prabhupāda's wife Śītalā Sundarī left behind her body and went to the next world, after only a few days of illness. At this, Prabhupāda lost his faith in worldly life. Worldly life for him began to feel like a prison of misery. Here there is nothing called happiness, only the essence of misery. Becoming deluded by the illusion of this false worldly life a human being neglectfully loses such a rare human birth. Seeing the impermanence of this kind of worldly existence his mind became even more indifferent towards it. However that may be, now his major worry was: who will take care of this nursing child? His neighbors and friends all encouraged Prabhupāda to marry a second time. He made it known that he was deeply against that proposal. Even so his childhood friend Yāminī Kumāra Banerjee Mahāśaya encouraged him with special vigor. He said: "Goswami, if you do not marry now who will take care of this poor motherless child? Besides that, you yourself are still young. If there is no wife in the house, who will look after you?" Prabhupāda was then twenty-eight years old. He was not at all in agreement with this proposal, but he was especially worried about his child. Then Prabhupāda's own *dhāimā* (wet nurse) said to him: "You do not have to worry about this child. In the same way that I raised you, I will raise this son of yours." When Dhāimā said this Prabhupāda became free from worry.

Pilgrimage to Holy Sites

With appearance of intense detachment from household life at the loss of his first wife, Prabhupāda Tinkādi Gosvāmin decided to tour all of India's holy places of pilgrimage. One day, taking with him a *bhakta* named Jānakī Häita from the village of Sāgarpur, which is south of Manoharpur, he started out for the northern regions. With Jānakī Häita he first went to Haridwar. He visited many of the important places in Haridwar, but he felt no peace of mind. After staying a few days in Haridwar he went to Rishikesh. At Rishikesh, seeing the babbling Gaṅgā flowing from the foothills of the Himālayas, Prabhupāda felt some peace. After staying for a few days at Rishikesh they started out for Kedarnath and Badarikashram. At that time travelling to Kedarnath and Badarikashram was not as easy as it is today. One had to travel by foot and so Prabhupāda started out on foot.

A deep feeling for the Himālayas, the place of austerities, filled Prabhupāda's mind. It was as if some unknown divine being were beckoning him saying: "Come, come. Come home, o child who has forgotten your true nature. Having fallen into the grip of *māyā* for time without beginning, how many agonies you have suffered. Now, come home. Here there is no sadness; here there is enduring peace. Here there is no darkness. Here, illumined by divine beings, there is enduring bliss. Here, there is enduring satisfaction. Don't cast your gaze again behind you at *māyā*. Coming here you will be filled with bliss." In Prabhupāda's hand was his string of beads for reciting the holy names. The holy names were flowing ceaselessly. Crossing peak after peak Prabhupāda arrived at Devaprayag.

Seeing the beauty of Devaprayag, Prabhupāda was overwhelmed. On one side was the Bhāgīrathī and on the other, the stream of the

Alakānandā came down and joined it. It was surrounded on all sides by mountain peaks. Prabhupāda, after finishing his bathing rites at the point where the Bhāgīrathī and the Alakānandā joined, sat on a fine rock nearby and repeating the holy names, absorbed in their ceaseless flow, his mind in deep meditation. Suddenly, he was startled by the call of Jānakī Hāita: "Goñsāi! Let's go. Let's start out now."

Again they moved up the path. They travelled along a narrow mountain path, sometimes with their faces turned down and sometimes with their faces turned up. At the end of the day, they spent the night at some tiny mountain village in an abandoned hut. When morning arrived, after finishing their baths, they took again to the path. In this way, viewing the profound natural beauty of the Himālayas, the land of asceticism, they headed on towards Rudraprayag. The path was mostly deserted. From time to time some mountain tribals came along herding flocks of sheep. Sometimes perhaps they met a few saintly *mahātmas* with matted hair. Or, somewhere on the bank of the Alakānandā in a narrow cave they saw some saintly *mahātma*. Seeing their attachment to worship in the thoroughly solitary reaches of the Himālayas, Prabhupāda's mind became even more detached. How much longer until he too would cut the bonds of this illusory worldly life and in a thorough, whole-hearted way take shelter at the feet of Śrī Govinda? This kind of thought made his mind indifferent to worldly existence. In this way, after crossing through many splendid surroundings they arrived at Rudraprayag.

After bathing at the meeting of the Mankākinī and the Alakānandā, they stayed for a few days before starting out for Kedarnath. When he started his wandering to the holy places, Prabhupāda brought some money with him to pay for expenses on the road. With that they travelled along, sometimes eating cooked meals and sometimes just fruit and raw vegetables. Travelling onwards in this way Prabhupāda came to Guptakashi. There he visited Baba Bholanath and set out to see Tricukī Nārāyaṇa. There, the climb was extremely difficult. All the mountain peaks seemed to kiss the sky. In the distance, there was frozen snow on the peaks. Prabhupāda tolerated the many troubles and arrived at Tricukī Nārāyaṇa. After seeing the sacred image of Tricukī Nārāyaṇa, he went on to visit Kedarnath. There, the climb was even more difficult than before. The path was not level anywhere. It was only climbing and climbing some more. Many other *sādhus* and pilgrims had also started out on that path to visit Kedarnath. When Prabhupāda arrived at Kedarnath the sun was just setting. It was very cold and there was frozen snow in all directions. Prabhupāda visited the sacred image of Kedarnath and

spent the night in a hostel for pilgrims. In his mind, though, he was not satisfied. The next day Prabhupāda got up from bed and decided to begin the journey to see Badarikashram. From Kedarnath they first went to Gaurikund and bathed in the hot springs there. Then they went to Sonaprāyag and by way of Guptakashi, they started for Badarikashram. In this way after passing through many places they reached Yogimath. After resting there for a couple of days they proceeded on to Vishnuprāyag and from there, after overcoming many difficulties, they arrived finally at Badarikashram.

There the beauty of the place was so attractive to the mind. The Alakā-nandā flowed gurgling along in front of the temple. Behind the temple was Mount Nara and in front, Mount Nārāyaṇa. To the south of Nara was the extremely high, snow-covered Mount Nīlakanṭha. In the light of the sun the mind-pleasing beauty expanded. Prabhupāda after viewing Badrīnārāyaṇa took his bath in the hot springs there. After resting for a few days there, they started out to visit the cave of Vyāsadeva. In that cave Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana Vedavyāsa wrote the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*. Prabhupāda after visiting the cave of Vyāsa went to see Bhīmapula. When the five Pāñḍavas arrived at this place on their journey to heaven they were unable to cross the fast-moving river there. Bhīma created a bridge over it with a massive stone. Therefore, the place's name is Bridge of Bhīma (Bhīma-pula). Prabhupāda visited Bhīmapula and returned to Badrīnārāyaṇa. Even after visiting all those places Prabhupāda did not feel even the most ordinary peace. After this, he decided to return to Haridvāra. In this way, after travelling on the path for many long days and passing through many adventures he returned with his friend Jānakī Hāita to Haridwar.

From Haridwar he began another pilgrimage. From Haridwar he went to visit Kurukshetra, Pushkar and so forth and arrived finally in Ayodhya. From there he visited Kashi, Prayag, Gaya and so forth and then, after a long time away, he returned again to his own home.

Prabhupāda had returned after travelling around to the holy sites. Receiving this news, many of his disciples from the surrounding towns and villages came to Manoharpur to escort him to their homes. Prabhupāda, too, spent some days immersed in the joy of *saṅkīrtana* at his disciples' houses. Meanwhile, all of Prabhupāda's friends began to beg him insistently to marry again. Prabhupāda was extremely averse to this, but he did not outwardly reveal it. In secret he left his house again desiring this time to visit the holy sites in eastern India.

Prabhupāda first went to the holy place of the goddess, Kāmarūpa Kāmāksyā. After viewing the goddess Kāmāksyā he started out for Paraśurāma Kunḍa. The path was unfamiliar. Prabhupāda proceeded by inquiring again and again.

One day while travelling on the path evening came. It was a forest path and there was no sign anywhere of human habitation. Wearied, exhausted, and hungry Prabhupāda became worried. He continued moving down that dense forest path. Gradually the darkness became even more thick. Prabhupāda now became agitated and began to worry about a way out. Suddenly, it was as if a ray of hope shown down. Someone carrying a lantern was coming towards him. The person seeing Prabhupāda in that lonely spot was extremely surprised, and what he said in the language of the villages was something like this: "Traveller, you have lost your way. If you stay here you will find yourself in the belly of a ferocious tiger. Come. I will show you a place where you can spend the night."

After saying something like this, he guided him a little further along and showed him an ancient temple. He then warned him that he should not go outside in the night. Prabhupāda took a few steps towards the temple and then looked behind him; he was greatly surprised to see that there was no sign of that man. Nevertheless, he decided to spend the night in a room of that broken down temple. Prabhupāda was then extremely hungry and he helplessly began to do *japa* on his *harināma* beads. After a while he heard a *jhumi-jhum* sound outside, like the sound of ankle bells. Prabhupāda's ears perked up and he began to listen carefully to try to determine what that sound belonged to. It sounded to him like the sound of the ankle bells of a woman. Indeed, a woman with some food on a plate entered into Prabhupāda's room. That woman asked Prabhupāda in a village dialect to eat some food. Prabhupāda thought to himself that there must be a human settlement nearby and that she brought the food from there, knowing that there was a guest in the vicinity. He was then very troubled by hunger. Without giving it any special thought he ate the food. After giving Prabhupāda the food, that woman without saying anything more departed accompanied by the *jhumi-jhum* sound. Some doubt entered Prabhupāda's mind and suddenly after peeking outside, he was astonished to find that there was no trace of that woman. He thought to himself that this was certainly the goddess Kāmāksyā who came and gave him grace-food. Thinking in this way, his chest became soaked with his tears. Then, after experiencing extraordinary tastes while eating the grace-food, he expressed his

salutation at her feet again and again and made this request: "O Goddess, you have shown me such grace, Mother. Let me attain *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa and make this human birth of mine fortunate." After honoring [eating with respect] the grace-food, he began chanting the holy names and when he fell asleep he did not know. When he awoke he saw that night was over. The birds in the trees loudly announced the rising of the sun. When he awoke from sleep, he felt himself to be much more healthy and strong than before. In this way, he passed through a series of various visions and adventures and visited many of the holy sites of eastern India.

There was another incident from this period. While Prabhupāda was travelling, at some point he came to the home of some great holy man saint. Coming near him Prabhupāda was filled with his power. He stayed there a few days and served him. One day the holy man said: "You have served me a great deal. What do you want?" Prabhupāda replied: "I want pure *bhakti* to the lotus feet of the Divine Couple." The holy man said: "I will not be able to give you that. Go to Vṛndāvana. There, your desired objective will be fulfilled. Still, you have given me so much service. I want to give you a little something in return. Do you want anything else?" Then Prabhupāda said: "See, Mahārāja. I am from a family of gurus. Receiving gifts as a guru is our custom. Moreover, I do not have that much of an education. Therefore, I don't have any real knowledge of scripture. In order to properly reply to the questions of one's students, knowing the arguments of scripture is necessary. Please give me your grace so that I will be able to understand the deep meanings of scripture." The holy man gave his blessing to Prabhupāda and said: "Go. From now on all the arguments of scripture will manifest within you." A little while after that Prabhupāda started out for his home.

Prabhupāda traveled around to so many holy sites but still did not find even the most ordinary peace. Gradually, his indifference towards household life continued increased. After returning to Manoharpur and spending some time at the houses of his disciples and at Navadvip he departed again on a journey to the holy places of South India. After wandering around to all the holy sites in South India starting with Ramesvaram, Kanyakumari and so forth he returned once more to his home in Manoharpur.

Second Marriage

Now Prabhupāda focused his mind on spreading the holy name in the towns and villages. He did not like to stay at home. He began to spend more of his days in the *saṅkirtana* of the holy names among his disciples moving from one village to another. He did not want to return to his home. Because, when he did return to his home, all of his friends would beg him to get married again. In such a mood he one day became extremely detached and determining that he would never return to his home again, he went to Vṛndāvana. There he went to the *siddhabābā* (Manohara Das Baba) at Govindakuṇḍa and began to stay there. After staying there for a few days Prabhupāda began to be troubled by the experience of the impulse of sexual desire. Siddhabābā knew everything. One day he said to Prabhupāda: "Goswami, You should return to your home." Prabhupāda became extremely sad and said: "Mahārāja, I do not want to return to the cycle of *māyā* again. Please give me shelter and make me successful." Siddhabābā replied: "If you say that, Goswami, what good will it do? You have even now some remaining karma to experience. Apart from that, there are many necessary things that you must achieve. I tell you: return home and marry again. After that, when the time is right Rādhārāṇī will draw you back. Don't worry. Your desired goal will be achieved." With no other choice Prabhupāda stayed another few days and returned back home.

At Prabhupāda's return all of the villagers were overjoyed. His friend Yāminī Banerji and many who were older than he now pressed Prabhupāda to marry. By the order of Siddhabābā and the requests of all the villagers Prabhupāda agreed to marry.

On an auspicious day, at an auspicious moment, Prabhupāda's second marriage with Sarasvatī Devī, the 12 year old daughter of Āśutosa

Hada who lived in a village near Manoharpur, was performed. His age then was probably 32 or 33. Everyone thought that this time his mind would become drawn to worldly life. But that did not happen. His indifference to household life remained unflagging like before.

After only three years has passed in his second marriage, his household life sustained another fierce blow. His wet-nurse whom he loved dearly died after an illness of only a few days. At this Prabhupāda was deeply affected. Seeing that at every step worldly existence is impermanent, he lost all faith in the happiness of worldly existence. Now he spent more time each day applying his mind to thinking about the Lord. At that time, Prabhupāda used to wake up in the third *ghaṭikā*² of the night and sit to do private worship (*bhajana*) and he would remain seated until eleven in the morning in doing private worship.

In one way, his worship was not accomplished by staying at home. He had to pull the living beings, burned by the three miseries and devoured by *māyā*, out of their suffering. In order to free the living beings from their suffering, he had to leave his house specially to spread the holy names from village to village. At that time at whatever house he stayed in he encouraged the unbroken *saṅkīrtana* of the holy names. Then, being attracted to Prabhupāda's firmness in practice and his discussions of Hari people came in groups and began to receive initiation from him. The number of his disciples began to increase day by day. Whichever house he went to, there many *bhaktas* would come. As a result, poor householders were not bold enough to invite him to their houses.

One young son of a poor householder, influenced by the power of Prabhupāda revealed his enthusiasm to receive initiation from him. Hearing that, that young man's father burst into anger. He scolded his son: "Sure! Into this little shamble of a house he is bringing an elephant. Into this little shamble of a house he is bringing an elephant. He will break it down, pulverize it, and utterly destroy it. What business have we with that sort of guru? In two days, he will empty our house. Our guru should be like us. He will come here and then take out his flat rice from his house and eat. When he leaves I will be outwitted and give him just two paisa, and he will take it and leave. What business have we with that kind of big guru?" Without any recourse that young man was

²The third 24 minute period of the night. The period of night begins according to Indian custom at 11:42 PM. Thus, Goswami Tinkudi rose seventy-two minutes after the beginning of night, or around 1:00 AM.

forced to give up his desire to receive initiation from Prabhupāda. With the coming of many disciples, many amazing incidents also occurred.

One time a young *brāhmaṇa* accepted initiation from Prabhupāda. At that that *brāhmaṇa*'s mother expressed her great dissatisfaction: "Sure! Alas, son! We are *brāhmaṇas*. That fellow of a lower caste. Therefore, Bābā, why have you in the end gone and become a lower caste."

Day after day Prabhupāda's influence began to increase. When he went from one disciple's house to another disciple's house, his disciples gathered together into a group and would go along with him performing *saṅkīrtana* of the holy name. At that time although he was indifferent to worldly, household life and his private worship was intense, he was unable to give up the hookah. Prabhupāda thought to himself: "This, too, is a chain." Thinking like this he made up his mind to give up smoking. One day a person named Śrīdhara, who was specially well-known to him, asked for Prabhupāda's hookah. Prabhupāda then offered all of his smoking paraphernalia to Śrīdhara and said: "Śrīdhara, you should not return these things to me. Take them away. I will never smoke again." Saying this, gave everything over and was freed. After that Prabhupāda never smoked again. At that time he was no longer wearin expensive clothes like he was before. He only wore a cotton dhoti and waistcoat (vest).

When he went to the houses of his disciples, he would not stay in anyone's house. Instead, he would build a small hut of leaves, branches, and bamboo in some uninhabited place nearby and do his private worship inside it. When he was doing his private worship, sometimes from outside the hut one would hear him shouting and sometimes hear him weeping. He did not under any condition fail to perform his regular private worship. In the third *ghāṭikā* of the night he would take his bath, enter his hut, and sit for private worship. Only in the afternoon would he read the *bhakti* scriptures and in the evening take part in *saṅkīrtana* of the holy names. Sometimes, during the *saṅkīrtana* of the holy names he would dance so wildly and shout so loudly that many seeing him in this unprecedented condition, would become frightened.

At this time Prabhupāda, suffering feeling of separation from the Lord, went to Nīlācala. After arriving there, he decided that he would do his private worship in Nīlācala permanently, making up his mind never again to return to his house. Residing there he began to do private worship with resolve, visit the image of Jagannātha and spread the holy

names. At that time, many Bauls, becoming enchanted by his heart-touching talks about Hari chose Prabhupāda as their guru and were blessed. Six months passed in this way. Meanwhile, back home, Prabhupāda's wife, Sarasvatī Devī, was crying and in great distress. Troubled by her tears a fellow who was specially well-known to Prabhupāda named Hari Jānā from the village of Galāgeche near to Manoharpur took Sarasvatī Devī with him and went to Nīlācala looking for Prabhupāda. There, troubled by the crying of Sarasvatī Devī, Prabhupāda returned again to Manoharpur.

If he returned home, though, what would happen? For Prabhupāda the household began to feel like a waterless well. He began to spend his days like before in the bliss of *saṅkīrtana* at the houses of his disciples. During that period he became the father of two more daughters. After a spending a few days in this manner Prabhupāda's desire arose to leave Manoharpur and live permanently in Navadvīpa. After that, without much delay he went to Navadvīpa along with his family.

In Navadvīpa there was no place for Prabhupāda to live. At that time there was a *bābā*, who used to only eat fruit, doing private worship at Navadvīpa's Manipur Ghāṭ (quay). He used have great faith in Prabhupāda. The fruit-eating *bābā* conceived a desire to go to Vṛndāvana for a while to do private worship. Therefore, he handed over his *āśrama* to Prabhupāda and went off to Vṛndāvana. From then on Prabhupāda and his family began to live there. After the fruit-eating *bābā*'s departure for Vṛndāvana, Prabhupāda took care of his temple.

At that time there was a Goswami living in Telipādā who had old sacred images of the divine couple. Their name was Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. After the passing of that Goswami, his wife decided to sell those Rādhā-Mādhava images to some rich Śeṭh from Kolkātā, because it was impossible for her to keep up the service of those images. One day the sacred images gave that old Goswami lady a dream order at night, according to which she was to give the sacred images to Prabhupāda Tinkadi Goswami. After receiving that dream order, that old Goswami lady came to Prabhupāda the next morning in a tearful state and telling him the whole story of the dream, made known to him her desire to give over the images she served to Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda in great pleasure accepted her offer and began to consider himself blessed. In time, after establishing the extremely beautiful Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Mādhava and along with them a sacred image of Śrīman Mahāprabhu he considered himself most fortunate. After the establishment the names of the

images were changed to Śrī Śrī Rādhāvallabha. Since then those images have been served in a very beautiful way in the Śrī Śrī Rādhāvallabha temple on Navadvīpa's Maṇipur Ghāṭ Road. Gradually, with the increase in the number of his disciples, the expenses for the service of those images and of Prabhupāda were assumed by the disciples. At that time, there was no Nāṭa-mandira [audience hall just before the image room] in front of the temple of Rādhāvallabha. After the sacred images were established, the disciple-*bhaktas* joined together, repaired the temple, and constructing a tin roof, built the audience hall.

Even after coming to Navadvīpa, Prabhupāda did not stay in populated places. He used to spend his days on the bank of the Ganges under a tree absorbed in private worship. When gradually more and more people came to see him he went to the Bāblā forest on the other bank of the Ganges and performed private worship for a few days. Not even the least bit of attachment was seen in Prabhupāda who was born with detachment. Even though he had a wife, a son, daughters and many disciples, Prabhupāda was always free of company. In this period, too, he used to visit Vṛndāvana from time to time, spend a few days there and then return to Navadvīpa.

At this time, Prabhupāda became particularly close to Rāmadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. Bābājī used to look upon Prabhupāda with special faith. Seeing Prabhupāda he would show extreme humility. Prabhupāda was very embarrassed by this. In later times, Prabhupāda expressed his sadness in this way: "Even though I tried many times, I was not able to give my prostrated obeisances to Bābājī first. I tried very hard, but whenever I would go to prostrate before him, I found that he was already prostrated before me." Bābājī Mahārāja's humility and example were particularly powerful influences on Prabhupāda's mind.

Navadvīpa Prabhupāda passed his days in discussions of Hari and in *sāṅkīrtana*. He engaged in son through his first wife, Vṛndāvana [Candra] Goswami, in the study of Sanskrit. At that time Prabhupāda visited Manoharpur from time to time. Once, in Manoharpur, he established the performance of a four-month-long great sacrifice (*mahāyajña*) consisting of the uninterrupted singing of the holy names. A little while after that, Prabhupāda desired to establish a Navakufja (Nine *kuñjas* or bowers or garden houses) and have the uninterrupted great sacrifice of the holy names performed in them. This would mean establishing nine garden or bower houses in nine places and carrying out the simultaneous, uninterrupted singing of the holy names in each of those nine houses. Prab-

hupāda was worried because he thought this would be very expensive. When the *bhaktas* came to know of Prabhupāda's desire they decided conjointly to meet the costs of that performance of the nine bowers. In not too long the uninterrupted great offering of the holy names in the nine bower houses began. Many people began to come to Manoharpur from the surrounding towns and villages to see this unprecedented sacrificial performance. Some of the villagers began to assist the performance of the *yajña* by bringing rice, dāl, and vegetables according to their ability. It was as if a market place of love (*prema*) had opened in Manoharpur. Seeing this amazing *yajña* performance everyone was astounded. As the news spread from village to village many people came everyday day from farther and farther places to float on this tide of the love of the holy name.

After this sacrificial performance had gone on in this way for many days, a day for its cessation was determined. The images of Śrī Śrī Gaura and Balarāma's were decorated and a litter was beautifully adorned to carry them out on procession. In the *āśram* at Manoharpur there was a forest of people that day. Prabhupāda asked one *bhakta* to supply lots of sweets and black pepper molasses. And, since the parade would last for four or five hours, he also asked him to have Sarbat made and brought as well, in case people became thirsty. Then the procession began. A large *saṅkīrtana* party was formed with drums, hand symbols, and gongs and the sounds of *saṅkīrtana* filled the air and lead the way. After that came the sacred images of Śrī Śrī Gaura and Balarāma on the decorated litter and countless people followed them overwhelmed by love. One felt as if it was truly Nitāi and Gaura leading and followed by *bhaktas* who were fascinated by them. In the minds of all those who saw that beautiful procession the image of the Moon of Nadiyā, Śrī Gaurasundara of a few hundred years before was awakened. It was truly as if Gaurasundara was moving along in the bliss of *saṅkīrtana* followed by the residents of Nadiyā who were fascinated by him. The sounds of that *saṅkīrtana* travelled very far and infused the minds of the people with deep emotions.

Back at the *āśram* huge preparations for the big celebration were underway. Thousands of *bhaktas* would receive grace-food (*prasāda*). The cooks were working tirelessly. The *saṅkīrtana* party, after performing *saṅkīrtana* throughout the town returned around 2 o'clock with the images of Gaura and Balarāma. Along with them came countless people enchanted by divine love. Prabhupāda gave the order to Bhāgavata Dādā (one the special recipients of his grace) to begin *kīrtana*. Bhāgavata

Dādā began an especially enchanting *kīrtana*: “Gaura came home; my Nitai came home. Śacīmātā came running and took Gaura on her lap.”³ He sang this song. Dancing and performing this *kīrtana*, Bhāgavata Dādā drenched everyone in Gaura’s love. After performing *kīrtana* in this way for an hour, the end of the festival was announced. Everyone was exhausted from the procession. Meanwhile, the cooking for the celebration was almost done. After the food had been offered to the sacred images, the meal began. There was no need of invitation. As soon as one sat, grace-food was served. Hundreds and hundreds people after satisfying themselves with grace-food, departed for their homes and again hundreds and hundreds of more people sat to have grace-food. Where so many people came, who can say? The distribution of grace-food continued on ceaselessly. The sun was about to set. Meanwhile, the grace-food was also almost exhausted, but even then the number of people coming for grace-food did not diminish. The servers became specially worried. What to do now? At just that moment the sky became covered with clouds and darkness spread in all directions. In a short while a torrential downpour of rain started. The rain would not stop. After raining in this way for more than an hour, nature became peaceful. The arrival of people also stopped. Everyone was fully satisfied by the remaining grace-food.

Prabhupāda’s mind, however, in any circumstances kept returning to the holy abode of Vṛndāvana. He began to wonder how long it would be before he became free from the bondage of impermanent worldly existence, made up of *māya*, and with his body, mind and words would find shelter at the lotus-feet of the young couple [Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa]. In time, he arranged the marriage of his son Vṛndāvana Goswami. And after offering his first daughter in marriage into the hands of Anil Kumar Banerjee, the son of his childhood friend Jamini Kumar Banerjee, he became for the most part free of worry. Now thinking of a way to leave home, he one day expressed his feelings to his wife Sarasvatī Devī: “Look, worldly life is impermanent and without real happiness. For so long we have practiced this householding way of life. Have we attained the highest goal by it? Among all the different kinds of duties human beings have to perform the most important duty is worship of God. Having attained such a rare human birth, if one does not worship the Lord then birth as an animal would have been better. If enjoying pleasure is the primary objective of life then what is the point of having a human

³gaura elo ghare āmār nitāi elo ghare; dheye giye śacīmātā gaura nilo kole.

birth? In an animal birth one can enjoy the pleasures as much as one wishes. Therefore, I don't think we should delay any longer. You are my partner in religion, my helper in reaching the supreme goal. Help me now. Give me your permission. I want to go to Vṛndāvana. Engaging this stool, urine, and worm-infested body for the sake of the youthful couple, I will spend what remains of my life. Don't feel any kind of sadness. I have left behind countless progeny to look after you. They will take care of you." At Prabhupāda's distressed entreaty Sarasvatī Devī with tearful eyes made know her agreement and thus indeed became his helper for the highest goal. After that Prabhupāda indeed, without telling anyone tore asunder the netting of the *māyā* of worldly existence and started out for the holy land of Vṛndāvana. Prabhupāda then left one unmarried daughter behind.

Intense Practice in Vṛndāvana

Now Prabhupāda Tinkadī Goswami being forever freed from his bonds to worldly existence (i.e., household life), his mind distressed because of separation from the divine couple, went to Siddha Manohar Dās Bābā of Govindakunḍa at Govardhana. With torn clothes, soiled face, and eyes full of tears he began to roll on the ground at Siddha Bābā's feet. Siddha Bābā laughing said: "Hey Gosai! What desire is in your mind?" Prabhupāda, drenching his chest with his tears, replied: "Mahārāja, please don't tell me to return home again. This time show me your grace and finding me a place at your feet, make me fulfilled." Siddha Bābā feeling amazed said: "What is this, Gosai? You are of the family of Ācāryas. Living beings bound to worldly existence are fulfilled by taking shelter at *your* feet. Such talk from your lips does not become you. Rise up. Become calm and rest now without worry." In this way Prabhupāda stayed with Siddha Bābā for some time and receiving from him many instructions on the secret worship of Vraja, he felt himself fulfilled. His initiation mantra he had received from his father Harimohan Goswami.

Then Prabhupāda's mind became anxious to do private worship in an exclusive way. He went to some deserted forest within the circle of Vraja and with his body, mind and words became fully engaged in exclusive private worship. But time and again the thought came to him: "I have left behind worldly life, but I have not changed my worldly garb (*veśa*).⁴ Therefore, before everything else I have to change this garb." Thinking in this way Prabhupāda one day expressed this wish to change

⁴Give explanation of the importance of this change of dress.

his garb to Siddha Bābā. Siddha Bābā became troubled at this request and replied: "Look, Gosai. You are of the family of Ācāryas. How can I give you the [renunciant's] habit and become your guru? This will not happen through me. Besides that, what need is there for you to change your garb?" Prabhupāda was unable to be satisfied with this statement of Siddha Bābā. After this, he went to many of the highest-level Mahātmas of Vraja and requested them to change his garb. But no one was willing to give him the change of garb rite and become his guru. Then Prabhupāda decided to change his garb himself. One day he took one of Siddha Bābā's rope loin-clothes and making the Lord his witness changed his garb [into that of a Vaiṣṇava renunciant, i.e. a *bābā*]. Along with that he took up a water pot and a staff. He made a vow that as long as he remained alive he would not touch money and not see the face of his wife again. It goes without saying that as long as he lived he fully kept his vow. After this, Prabhupāda begging permission from Siddha Bābā went forth to do private worship in some deserted place.

When Prabhupāda came to Vṛndāvana he brought a servant with him. His name was Śibu Adhikārī. Prabhupāda was living along with him on the bank of Rādhākuṇḍa. Suddenly, after a sickness of only a few days, Śibu Adhikārī left his mortal body and went to the next world. Receiving news of his death, his son Nitāi Adhikārī came from his home to Rādhākuṇḍa. After staying with Prabhupāda for a few days he decided that he, too, would not return to his home and instead he became engaged in Prabhupāda's service. A few days after that Prabhupāda went to Keśīghāṭa with Nitāi Adhikārī. After staying there for some time, Nitāi Adhikārī also fell sick and departed for the next world. When Nitāi Adhikārī passed away Prabhupāda became rather worried. A few days after that a youth by the name of Ayodhyā Dās became engaged in Prabhupāda's service. This Ayodhyā Dās' service was truly inspiring. Prabhupāda was very pleased by his whole-hearted service.

Prabhupāda now taking Ayodhyā Dās with him went to various deserted forests in the circle of Vraja and began to do intense private worship. Sometimes under a tree and sometimes in a lonely and abandoned hut (*kuṭīra*) Prabhupāda did private worship. At that time Prabhupāda had no *āśram* in Vraja. He used to observe rules of private worship in a most unbending way. At one o'clock in the morning he would sit for private worship and after that at around four o'clock he would go out to take his bath and so forth. After that he would again sit in his appointed seat and practice private worship the whole rest of the day

in a state of silence (*mauna*). Then at sunset he would get up. Ayodhyā Dās, after going to beg for alms in the nearby villages, would take care of Prabhupāda's service. Unpopulated forest settings were especially dear to Prabhupāda. As his habitual dress he only used to wear a burlap loin cloth and over his body a burlap shawl or wrap. In this way, sometimes at Prema-sarovara, sometimes at Barsāñā, sometimes at Pāvana-sarovara, sometimes at Kāmyavana, or Ādibadrī, or Rasaulī, or Cāmelīvana, or Tapovana, or Akrūra Ghāṭa, or Pāni Ghāṭa, or at Durvāsā-kuṇḍa, he passed his time in the bliss of private worship. He did not stay at one place for a long time. When the arrival of people to visit him increased, then, without saying a word to anyone he would go somewhere else. Since of all the places in the circle of Vraja where Prabhupāda did private worship Rādhākuṇḍa was the place most dear to him, from time to time he would stay for a while on the bank of the blessed pond and then again head out to some deserted forest. Prabhupāda was fearless. Even while staying in many dangerous places he remained absorbed with a peaceful mind in the thought of the young couple [Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa]. Not ghosts, nor ghouls, nor tigers, nor snakes, nor any other living creatures were able to infuse fear into him.

Once at Premasarovara Prabhupāda was absorbed in private worship. When he was unable to complete the number of holy names he wanted to, he was deeply distressed. His longing for the young couple began to increase more and more. He made a solemn vow to perform even more intense private worship. Let there be practice of the *mantra* as long as the body does not fall away. His desire was that he would take his bath at two in the morning and then in one sitting perform his private worship. But since there is the regulation of taking one's bath during the *muhūrta* of Brahman, one has to wait until then to complete one's bath and other rites.⁵ One day after being absorbed in private worship late into the night, Prabhupāda was overcome by drowsiness for a little while. Suddenly, he was startled by someone's shout. He could hear that it was as if someone was shouting: "Hey, get up! Take your bath and then sit for worship!" When Prabhupāda did not find anyone even though he searched all around he became astonished. The next day again there was that same kind of shout: "Hey, get up! Take your bath and then sit for worship." Again though Prabhupāda searched around a great deal, he was not able to find anyone. He then thought to himself that it certainly must be Mahāprabhu's order. Thinking in this way, from

⁵The moment (*muhūrta*) of Brahman begins about an hour and a half before sunrise.

that day on he took his bath at two o'clock in the morning and then sat for his private worship.

Since his mind even then had not reached a state of steadiness, Prabhupāda felt great sadness. Even with many great efforts he was not able to be fulfilled. In this kind of condition, one night in the third hour he was seated on his seat. Suddenly, Prabhupāda saw a tall Vaiṣṇava standing before him with a well-shaped body, a shining golden complexion, a shaven head, a top knot, and tilak on his forehead. Prabhupāda lowered himself to the ground and offering obeisances to him, asked who he was. He replied: "I am Vallabhācārya. I am pleased with your attachment to private worship. I will give you a *mantra*. If you repeat this *mantra* your mental operations will quickly become peaceful and your mind will become steady." Saying this he gave Prabhupāda a *mantra* and disappeared. Prabhupāda repeated that *mantra* and in a short while attained an unprecedented result. His mental operations gradually became peaceful and became identified with the thought of the Lord.

In that condition, another night in the third hour Prabhupāda was seated on his private worship seat (*āsana*). At that time he saw that a Vaiṣṇava like the one before with a shining golden complexion was standing before him. In his hands was a string of *tulsi* beads. Prabhupāda bowed down like a stick before him and asked who he was. He said: "I am Viṭṭhal Nāth. I wish to place this garland around your neck." Prabhupāda became worried. He anxiously saw that if he took the neck beads from Viṭṭhal Nāthjī, the son of Vallabhācārya, he would be changing his Vaiṣṇava community [from the Caitanyite to the Vallabhaite community]. Fearing this, Prabhupāda in a very humble manner said: "Master! I have neck beads. Please give me your blessing instead that I may attain pure *bhakti* to the lotus feet of the young couple." After this Viṭṭhal Nāthjī with a pleased expression gave his blessing to Prabhupāda and disappeared.

After that Prabhupāda's private worship sharply increased in intensity. Through his absorption in private worship consciousness of his own body gradually decreased. While performing this extremely intense private worship in this way a long time, one day his heart and exterior became illumined with the light of consciousness. Prabhupāda opened his eyes and saw standing before him Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the embodiment of the pleasure-giving power, radiating the light of a million moons, smiling in her form as the bestower of great fearlessness. At the very sight alone it was as if every one of the molecules and atoms of

Prabhupāda's body was drenched in a shower of invisible love-nectar (*premāṁṛta*). Even though he gazed upon her without blinking he was not able to be satisfied. He began to think that if he had unlimited eyes it would help him a little to relish the sweetness of her beauty. Priyājī, the beloved of Kṛṣṇa, said: "Your wish has been fulfilled. Still, even now there will be much for you to accomplish. In proper time you will meet me again." Saying this Priyājī disappeared. And Prabhupāda fell unconscious at her disappearance. When his consciousness returned he began to think: "Have I seen a dream? No! Even now my molecules and atoms are being bathed in a shower of consciousness-nectar from seeing Priyājī. Alas! When will I again attain such a vision of Priyājī?" Saying this he began to cry with a troubled heart. In this way he began to pass his days in an extraordinary condition of deep absorption. (Since Prabhupāda had a close friendship with the scholar of Govardhana's Cāklesvara, Priyācaraṇa Dās Bābājī Mahārāja, one day when the two of them were enjoying Iṣṭagoṣṭhī [Discussions about Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa] Prabhupāda revealed the account of his vision of Priyājī to Bābājī Mahārāja.)

One day Prabhupāda's devoted attendant Ayodhyā Dās suddenly became ill with colera. He was seen by a few nearby doctors, but there was no good result. Gradually, his condition worsened. At that time there were a few other *bhaktas* staying with Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda asked one of those *bhaktas* to bring a new cloth. In a short while the new cloth was brought. Prabhupāda himself put a loincloth on Ayodhyā Dās and changed his habit [i.e. gave him initiation into the renunciant order]. In his ear he began to repeat the name of Kṛṣṇa. In this way while hearing the name of Kṛṣṇa the devoted servant of Prabhupāda, Ayodhyā Dās, left his perishable body and departed for eternal sport. Prabhupāda was deeply pained by Ayodhyā Dās's passing and began to worry about the well-being of his inner self (*ātman*). He went to Govardhana and for the benefit of Ayodhyā Dāsa organized a seven-day reading of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. But he was not satisfied even with that. He had served him for so many days and in such a devoted way, what was his state? Prabhupāda began to worry about this. Prabhupāda was then staying at the place where Rūpa Gosvāmin performed his private worship, Ṭeri Kadama. One day while he was worrying about what the outcome had been for Ayodhyā Dās he became drowsy. Suddenly, he heard Priyājī saying: "Hey! Why are you destroying your private worship by worrying about him? He has become engaged in my service even before you." Prabhupāda then became free of worry.

Prabhupāda spontaneously used to praise this Ayodhyā Dās. He used to say: "His renunciation, detachment and devotion to service were beyond comprehension. Such service no longer exists. Ayodhyā had some sort of spiritual power. It was as if somehow he was able to read one's mind. I thought to myself 'I will go get cleaned up,' and before saying a word I would find that Ayodhyā arrived with my waterpot filled with water. Sometimes perhaps my body was not well and I had a desire to eat another kind of food. I would see that before I said anything Ayodhyā would have brought the very thing I had been thinking about. How many times did I scold him, almost to the point of striking him, and yet I never saw his face become dejected." Whatever the case may be, after the death of Ayodhyā Dās Prabhupāda's service was somewhat impaired. A little while later, a *bhakta* named Gopīdās took up his service. After that Prabhupāda, taking Gopīdās with him, wandered around the circle of Vraja in the bliss of divine love (*prema*) and began to taste the rapturous flavors of the divine sports (*līlā-rasa*).

In the meanwhile, Prabhupāda had to return once to Manoharpur for the marriage of his youngest daughter. It goes without saying that after Prabhupāda had put on the loincloth he never again saw the face of his wife. When Prabhupāda went to Manoharpur, his wife Sarasvatī Devī had to stay somewhere else. This rule used to be followed even from before. Whatever the case may be, at the auspicious return of Prabhupāda to Manoharpur there was excitement in all the nearby towns and villages. Manoharpur was again flooded with the *saṅkirtana* of the holy names. After staying there a few days and planting the seed of thought of Kṛṣṇa in everyone, Prabhupāda returned to Navadvīpa.

At the news of Prabhupāda's auspicious return to Navadvīpa, waves of joy began to play among his disciples. Hundreds and hundreds of his disciples came to visit him; they began to gather into crowds. When Prabhupāda expressed a desire to stay on the bank of the Ganges his *bhaktas* built a bamboo and wicker hut on the bank of the Ganges for him to stay in. In great bliss he began to reside on that golden bank of the Ganges. At the auspicious arrival of Prabhupāda, a continuous great sacrifice (*mahā-yajña*) of the holy names started there. Along with that there was recitation of the *Bhāgavata*, songs about the divine sports and so forth. At the time countless people chose him as their guru and were gratified. In this way, Prabhupāda stayed for some time in Navadvīpa amidst a surge of love for the holy names and then returned to Vṛndāvana.

After arriving in Vṛndāvana, Prabhupāda wandered around to various locations of the divine sports and then went to Rādhākuṇḍa. At that time, a *bhakta* from Prabhupāda's home region came to him. He, too, decided that he would not return again to his home and was engaged in Prabhupāda's service. After that Prabhupāda had Gopīdāsa give him the change of habit rite [and he became a renunciant]. He was named Sītānātha Dāsa. A little while after that, Gopīdāsa left his mortal body and went to the next world. After Gopīdāsa departed, Sītānātha Dāsa became engaged in Prabhupāda's service. After that, gradually more and more servant-*bhaktas* began to stay with Prabhupāda.

After this Prabhupāda became engaged in the work of spreading the faith. With a group of *bhaktas* he began to spread the holy names from village to village in the circle of Vraja. In each village Prabhupāda used to put on seven-day recitations of the *Bhāgavata* and *saṅkīrtana* of the holy names. Along with that, celebration treasurers used to be employed. Whatever village Prabhupāda used to visit, Vrajavāsīs would come each day out of a desire to see him. The ladies of Vraja, gathering together in groups, used to come to see him singing songs the whole while. Since, at that time, too, Prabhupāda used to practice a vow of silence all day long, the Vrajavāsīs started to call him Maunī Bābā (Silent Father). When he went to a village he did not stay in the middle of the village. Instead he stayed in some isolated place nearby. Prabhupāda used to sit the whole day under some isolated tree and do his private worship and his servants stayed in a nearby hut. Prabhupāda's rule was that at three o'clock in the morning everyone, after removing their dirty clothes and performing their bathing and cleaning rites, had to take part in *kīrtana*. If anyone did other than this, he had to go somewhere else. Whatever rice, flour, and vegetables the villagers used to give, that was used to serve guests and Vrajavādīs. His own servant-*bhaktas* would subsist by begging for alms (*madhukari*) from local villages. Everyday in the evening everyone also had to participate in the performance of *kīrtana*.

Once Prabhupāda was staying at Keśī Ghāṭ. Suddenly he had a desire to do private worship in Bhāṇḍira Forest on the other side of the Yamunā. Then the rainy season had just ended. Everyone said that if one went to Bhāṇḍira Forest, it would not be good, because even then everything would still be wet from the high waters of the rainy season. After a few days, going there would be fine. Prabhupāda, not listening to anyone's advice, started out for Bhāṇḍira Forest. With him went one servant. After arriving in Bhāṇḍira Forest Prabhupāda began to stay

in an abandoned hut. Since the floor was soaked his servant gathered some dry straw and spread it out on the floor. The hut's walls were not dry either and there was a musty odor. Prabhupāda started to reside there in the bliss of divine love. One day at two in the morning Prabhupāda sat down for private worship. The servant was singing songs about the sports of the young couple at the end of the night. Suddenly, hearing Prabhupāda's voice the servant came to him quickly and saw that Prabhupāda was shaking. When he suddenly began to collapse to the ground the servant quickly caught hold of him. As he was watching Prabhupāda went unconscious. The servant became extremely unsettled and started to think of what to do.

Before sunrise the news was given to a Vrajavāsī to whom Prabhupāda had shown his grace at Keśī Ghāṭ. That Vrajavāsī without any delay went to Bhāṇḍir Forest and was ready to take Prabhupāda to his own house. In the meantime Prabhupāda had returned to consciousness, but he was unable to speak. Since he was also unable to stand, three or four people together lifted him into a tāṅgā (a two-wheeled, horse drawn carriage). It was discovered that the left side of his body was paralyzed. Receiving the news that Prabhupāda was paralyzed many *bhaktas* came to Vṛndāvana from Bengal wishing to see him. He was shown to some very good doctors and his treatment was started. In this condition Prabhupāda stayed at Keśī Ghāṭ and though some recovery occurred he was not able to move well. After that, at Prabhupāda's wish he was taken from there to Rādhākuṇḍa. Even then he was not able to do anything with his left arm and he was not able to speak clearly. In the meantime, at Prabhupāda's wish two āśramas were acquired, one in Rādhākuṇḍa and one in Govardhana. Though Prabhupāda underwent treatment for a long time at the āśrama in Rādhākuṇḍa and became more or less well, he never again reached full recovery. After that time he always used a staff and moved on foot very slowly.

Many days had passed since Prabhupāda had come from Navadvīpa to Vṛndāvana. At the request of the residents of Navadvīpa Prabhupāda expressed a desire to visit Navadvīpa again. He had attained the highest treasure of human life. Now he was anxious to distribute that priceless treasure and to drive away the sufferings of living beings scorched by the three fires.⁶ On the appointed day Prabhupāda started out for Navadvīpa along with some of his disciple-servants.

⁶The three sufferings: sufferings relating to the body and mind (*ādhyātmika*), to other beings (*ādhikāra*), and to nature (*ādhidaivika*).

Prabhupāda arrived in Navadvīpa on schedule. Countless residents of Navadvīpa came out to welcome him at the Navadvīpa station. When Prabhupāda got off the train he was garlanded with a flower garland and as *sankīrtana* of the holy names filled the air he was taken to the Śrī Śrī Rādhāvallabha Temple on Maṇipur Ghāṭ Road. This time, too, by Prabhupāda's wish a hut was constructed on the bank of the Ganges for him to stay in. In front of the hut that he stayed in, in excellent spot, a huge canvas awning was put up. At the news of Prabhupāda's auspicious visit to Navadvīpa many of his disciples came from various parts of Bengal to see him. As a result of that, more and more people gradually began to arrive. Arrangements were made for hundreds of people to receive grace-food (*prasāda*) everyday. If one sat down, one received grace-food. There was no waiting for an invitation. Then, too, Prabhupāda used to practice his vow of silence during the day. In the evenings he would speak. In the afternoons readings of the *Bhāgavata* were arranged. Many readers were eager to present their readings before Prabhupāda. Therefore, specific times were assigned for everyone's readings. Many, not getting a chance to read, expressed their disappointment to Prabhupāda. At night there were *kīrtans* of the Padāvalī.⁷ The famous *kīrtana* singers of Bengal came and sang *kīrtans* for Prabhupāda. All day long, like the current of a river, people came and went. To make a few *paisā* at this opportune time, on both sides of the road Pan shops, snack shops, roasted cashew shops and such sprang up. In these surroundings on Gaura's bank of the Ganges, Prabhupāda in the bliss of divine love increased the joy of the *bhaktas*.

At this time, one of Prabhupāda special recipients of grace, a *bhakta* named Subal Māīti, had a dream one day in which Prabhupāda told him: "Subal, I have come to Navadvīpa. Quickly come here." Subal Māīti, too, had been thinking of a way to sever his ties to worldly life made of *māyā*. He did not waste any more time starting out for Navadvīpa. As soon as he arrived in Navadvīpa Prabhupāda said: "Who? Subal? Good! I have been thinking about you." Prabhupāda became pensive for a little while and then said with a sweet smile: "That face has not worked. Turn your face around!" Subal Dādā was startled by Prabhupāda's words. After this, he firmly made up his mind that he would not again return to worldly life. A few days after this at Prabhupāda's order he changed his garb and became engaged in Prabhupāda's service.

Many people used to come to ask all kinds of questions of Prab-

⁷Bengali and Brajabuli songs about Śrī Caitanya and Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

hupāda. But since he spent his whole day practicing a vow of silence no one used to ask him anything during the daytime. When the daytime was over he used to break his silence and speak with everyone. Prabhupāda used to answer all kinds of questions using very beautiful expressions. With many kinds of scriptural arguments he would teach that worldly existence is impermanent and that for living beings the worship of Hari was the most important thing to be performed.

One night, it would have been around eleven o'clock. Prabhupāda was walking slowly on the Gaura's bank of Ganges. With him was one Prabhupāda's recipients of grace, Nārāyaṇa Viśvāsa, and a few other *bhaktas*. In the moonlight there was a softness everywhere. The Ganges, river of the gods, was flowing with a gurgling sound. A soft, slow breeze was blowing. Along with that there was an unprecedented sweetness in everyone's hearts because of Prabhupāda's sweet closeness. Everything became quiet. Suddenly, Prabhupāda said: "Well, Nārāyaṇa, what beautiful moonlight! Is it not?" Nārāyaṇa Viśvāsa with an exultant heart said: "Yes, Bābā." Then Prabhupāda said: "See, what a beautiful breeze is blowing. Is it not?" Everyone replied: "Yes, Bābā."

"How do you like it?"

"We like it very well."

"Well, Nārāyaṇa. Have you bathed in the Ganges?"

"Yes, Bābā."

"How was it? Tell me."

"Bābā, taking into account all the places I bathe, the kind of peace I feel when I bathe in the Ganges, I don't feel anywhere else."

Prabhupāda seemed to become very pensive. A few moments later Prabhupāda broke the silence of the night and said: "Okay, Nārāyaṇa, do you have electricity at your house?"

"Yes, Bābā."

"A fan?"

"Yes, Bābā."

"Okay. For the lights that you burn and the fans that you run you don't have to pay some tax?"

"Bābā, one has to pay tax. Without tax how would we have such facilities."

Prabhupāda became very thoughtful and then said: "Now tell me, Nārāyaṇa. Bhagavān is providing this free air—which if it were stopped even for a short time human beings would lose their lives. He is giving the light of the sun and he is giving the lovely sweet light of the moon. If all these lights were stopped the whole earth would be in darkness. The beautiful water of the Ganges and the water beneath the soil; if this water were not there no living being would be able to remain alive. Bhagavān provides all these things for us our whole lives and for that Bhagavān there is nothings we should do? Look, Nārāyaṇa, aren't grateful? Bhagavān is providing for us in such a beautiful way and we can't find even the little bit of time needed to think about him? There is no mention of having to give him anything. One doesn't have to give him anything; he doesn't want anything in exchange. He has only mentioned saying his name with our lips. I will do all the work of mundane life, only I need to say his name with my mouth and just see how unfaithful we are, how ungrateful: without any great effort we are to say his name with our mouths and that little bit we cannot do. Nevertheless, see how compassionate Bhagavān is. Even if you don't give him anything and even if you do not accept him he does not deprive you of his grace. Who else is so merciful? Those who I think love me in this worldly existence, they, too, love me for some self-interest. Those for whose happiness we are wasting through neglect this rare human birth, they all love out of self-interest. See how Bhagavān is exactly the opposite of that. I don't love him; nevertheless see how much effort he makes to support us. Even before we are born he places milk in the breasts of our mothers so that we may survive. But we can't even spare the little bit of time it takes to say his love-rich name. And those for whose happiness we would give up our very lives, they waste our present lives and in the after life set us on the path to becoming guests in hell. And for the one who desires nothing at all, who only goes on giving, who even if we do not love him loves us, we will not even think about such a loving person as him for a little while. So ungrateful!" Prabhupāda's words made a deep impression on everyone's minds. With extremely beautiful turns of speech such as this Prabhupāda raised everyone's minds to contemplation on Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

During that period so many more *bhaktas* used to come that everyday was like a festival in the temple. From two o'clock in the day until two o'clock at night *bhakas* used to receive grace-food. Prabhupāda would request all those who came to see him to receive grace-food. By Prabhupāda's desire it was never heard that someone did not receive grace-

food. Since it was not known when Prabhupāda would send someone to have some grace-food, a little extra was always kept aside. Many times it was seen that after everyone had had grace-food and enough for five or six more people was put aside, Prabhupāda would send fifteen or twenty *bhaktas* to partake of grace-food. Perhaps then too there would not be time enough to cook again. Nevertheless, it was seen that everyone was satisfied with that little bit of grace-food. One day at around four o'clock Ramā Devī came with about 30 to 35 people to see Prabhupāda. In order to honor Prabhupāda's advice they all went to the temple. At the temple there was only enough grace-food kept aside for three or four people and there was not enough time then to cook again. With no other choice, that insufficient grace-food was distributed to everyone and what a wonder! Everyone was fully satisfied with that small amount of grace-food and returned to their homes. This kind of incident was seen many times.

This is another incident from the same time. Seeing so many people coming to visit Prabhupāda at that time, many *bhaktas* and non-*bhaktas* were anxious to come to see Prabhupāda also. Some who were full of devotion to God and some who were extremely curious used to come. One day an atheistic young man who was acquainted with a *bhakta* who was a recipient of Prabhupāda's grace made a vow that he would never go visit any holy man and that he would never eat any of that stuff they call grace-food. The person who had been given grace by Prabhupāda tried many times to get that young man to visit Prabhupāda, but the youth would not agree to visit him through any urging. One day that young man said to Prabhupāda's (*bhakta*): "Look, I don't accept any of that holy man business. I have heard, however, that your *gurudeva* is a perfected great-soul (*siddha mahātmā*). Therefore, if your *gurudeva* is able to bring me to see him, I will know that he really is a perfected great being (*siddha mahāpuruṣa*)."¹ With no other recourse, that *bhakta* decided he would never again ask that youth to go see Prabhupāda and left. As soon as he had departed, that atheistic youth began to feel some kind of strong attraction towards Prabhupāda. He began to think again and again: "If I go now, see him and then return, I will know what sort of holy man he is. So many people are going to see him. What could that be about?" He began thinking to himself in this way. Still, he could not muster the courage to go. If any of his friends or relatives saw him they would make fun of him. Maybe they would say: "What's this? Aren't you the one who won't go see any holy man? Why have you come now?" For fear of such comments he was unable to gather up the courage. Nevertheless,

he was unable to control the intense desire to visit Prabhupāda. With no other recourse, he decided privately that when no one else was there he would go see him. With this idea in mind, right at two o'clock, looking nervously this way and that, he went to Prabhupāda's hut. Prabhupāda was then observing his vow of silence. By signs he motioned the young man in. As if he were entranced by some mantra the young man entered inside and began looking at Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda began to smile at him tenderly. Then Prabhupāda gave the order for the young man to go have some grace-food. The young man also, like an extremely well-behaved boy, bowed down to him and went to temple to have some grace-food.

Anyway, Prabhupāda stayed several months in Navadvīpa in the midst of many incidents like these. Before he left Navadvīpa arrangements were made for an unprecedented festival there. At that festival grace-food was distributed to thousands and thousands of people. Then, after planting in this way the seed of contemplation on Śrī Kṛṣṇa in countless people in Navadvīpa, Prabhupāda went to Nilācala (Jagannātha Puri). There, too, after infusing grace into many living beings who had been scorched by the three fires, he returned to the holy land of Vṛndāvana.

When he returned to the holy land of Vṛndāvana, he began staying at Rādhākuṇḍa. Gradually, the number of *bhaktas* increased day by day. Many of the new arrivals among them changed their garb [became renunciants] and began staying with Prabhupāda. After this, whenever Prabhupāda went anywhere he always had ten or twelve renounced *bābājīs* staying with him. Most of the time he used to stay at Rādhākuṇḍa, the slope of Girirāja, Premasarovara, and Tapovana. From time to time he would visit some of the other sites of divine sport. When the arrival of people began to increase, Prabhupāda would start out for another place. Where and when he will go most of the time nobody was able to say. Many times it was seen that Prabhupāda would just suddenly start out for somewhere. His servant would ask: "Bābā! Where are you going?" Prabhupāda would mention another place. The servant would perhaps beg for a little time to pack up the supplies and utensils and in response Prabhupāda would say: "You pack up. I'm going." Saying something like this he would simply start off. With little other choice, the servant would quickly gather a few necessary things in a bag and hurry off after him.

Once Prabhupāda was staying by the side of Girirāja [Govardhana].

One day a rascal came to Prabhupāda to get a number for gambling [dice?]. Prabhupāda was then observing silence. The fellow, calling out “Bābā, Bābā,” entered into the hut. Prabhupāda raised his hand and showed him five fingers to indicate that he should come back in the afternoon after 5 o’clock. The fellow thought that Prabhupāda was telling him to use the number five. Very happily he went off and indeed in the game he bet a good amount of money on the number five. He bet and he bet again on the number five. The fellow won a lot of money. After that, with a little bit of a gift, he visited Bābā and told him the whole story. Bābā heard about it and was speechless. The very next day he picked up his seat and said: “Let’s go. Even here there is calamity. We will go somewhere else.”

One time Prabhupāda was staying at Rādhākuṇḍa. Meanwhile there was to be a feast for the sixty-four Mahāntas at Nityānanda Dhāma, the ashram that Prabhupāda had established in Govardhana. His disciples came to Rādhākuṇḍa to take him to Govardhana. Prabhupāda didn’t want to go to Govardhana. Everyone became completely obstinate and fell down at his feet. With no way out, Prabhupāda, even though he really didn’t want to, went to Govardhana at their request. That night Prabhupāda came down with a serious fever, so serious that he nearly became unconscious. In that condition he said: “Rādhārāṇī has again and again forbid me: ‘now don’t you leave Rādhākuṇḍa and go anywhere else.’ Not listening to her words I have come to Govardhana. Therefore, I am in this sorry state.” Then everyone understood why Prabhupāda did not want to leave Rādhākuṇḍa and go to Govardhana. They all began to feel sorry for their mistake. After that Prabhupāda became well again after a few days.

At this time Prabhupāda visited the forests as if for the last time. Niyama-sevā⁸ was not very far off. Prabhupāda spent a few days at the side of Girirāja-Govardhana in the bliss of private worship and then for Niyama-sevā went to Rādhākuṇḍa. His *bhakta*-servants followed Prabhupāda there. Receiving word that Prabhupāda was staying at Rādhākuṇḍa many *bhakta* Vaiṣṇavas from many places in Bengal came to Rādhākuṇḍa to observe Niyama-sevā. The four directions were alive with *sankīrtana* of the holy names. Circumambulations began and Prabhupāda’s ashram was buzzing with the arrival of *bhaktas*. In this way after having been bathed in a shower of the nectar of *prema* on the banks

⁸The regime of special practices undertaken by Caitanya Vaiṣṇavas during the month of Kārtika (October-November).

of Rādhākuṇḍa for one month, the *bhaktas* at the end of their Niyama-sevā vows returned to their homes. Prabhupāda after staying a few days at Rādhākuṇḍa went to Govardhana. He stayed there for the whole cold season. When the fury of the cold became calmed Prabhupāda started out for Premasarovara with his *bhaktas*. There, after increasing the joy of *bhaktas* and Vrajavāsīs alike for more than a month through *saikīrtana* of the holy names, seven-day readings of the *Bhāgavata*, and such he went to Kokilāvana. After spending a few days there at the request of Vrajavāsīs he went to Durvāsākuṇḍa in Kāmavana. After a few days' stay at Durvāsākuṇḍa Prabhupāda began to feel a particular pain in his stomach and at the insistence of his *bhaktas* he went to Keśīghāṭa in Vṛndāvana for diagnosis. He stayed there more than a month under treatment and felt somewhat better. After that, at the request of some Vrajavāsī *bhaktas* he went from Vṛndāvana to the Rāmajānaki temple at Aksarabaṭa near Tapovana. After staying there a few days he went on to Tapovana. After spending a few days in the bliss of divine love in Tapovana, in very charming surroundings on the bank of the Yamunā, he returned to Govardhana. After this, Prabhupāda's body gradually became more ill and he no longer went wandering from forest to forest. He only stayed at Govardhana, Rādhākuṇḍa, and Vṛndāvana after this.

Prabhupāda's Final Days

Prabhupāda at this time desired to go to Nīlācala [Puri]. He deputed one of his servants to write a letter to Navadvīpa. In a short while letters were written to Prabhupāda's disciples Dr. Suśīl Bhau-mik in Navadvīpa and Dilīp Kumār Mitra in Calcutta expressing his desire to go to Nīlācala. A few days later at the request of his *bhaktas* who were living in Vṛndāvana that he not go to Nīlācala, he changed his mind accordingly and ordered his servant to send a telegram to Calcutta and Navadvīpa. His order was duly followed. Meanwhile, as fate would have it the telegram was delayed in arriving and Dr. Bhaumik and Mitra Mahāśaya had started out for Vṛndāvana with the intention of taking Prabhupāda to Puri. Back in Vraja, Prabhupāda without worry [of travel] had decided to hold a seven-day reading of the *Bhāgavata* to be performed at Śrī Śrī Rādhāmūrārimohan Kuñja in Vṛndavana. To attend the seven-day reading of the *Bhāgavata*, at Prabhupāda's invitation, Śrī Priyācarana Dās Bābāji came from Govardhana to Śrī Rādhāmūrārimohan Kuñja. Two days after the beginning of the reading, Dr. Bhaumik and Mitra Mahāśay arrived in Delhi by airplane and after reserving four tickets for travel from Delhi to Puri, they continued to Vṛndāvana to take Prabhupāda to Puri. They had reserved tickets for a plane from Delhi to Bhuvaneśvara for the day following the day they arrived in Delhi. Because Prabhupāda's telegram did not arrive there arose this crisis. Hearing that Prabhupāda will not go to Puri they were extremely mortified. After this, because they specially begged Prabhupāda to go to Puri, Prabhupāda agreed to go to Puri. Meanwhile, the *bhaktas* who lived in Vṛndāvana did not want to let Prabhupāda go. On one side there was the supplications of the *bhaktas* who had come from Bengal and on the other side was the heart-felt petitions of the *bhaktas* who lived in Vṛndāvana and on top of it all there was the performance of

the seven-day reading of the *Bhāgavata*. Prabhupāda became specially anxious. Moreover he began to be drawn powerfully by the misery of the countless human beings scorched by the three heats [miseries] in Nīlācala and Bengal. He knew it was not much longer until he entered eternal sport. Indeed, a few months before this incident while he was staying at Rādhākuṇḍa, he told a servant that the end of his sport was near. Therefore, perhaps his mind became specially anxious to quell the tears of externally focused living beings who had been swallowed by the *māyā* of ignorance and point out for them the path of genuine light one last time. One imagines that thinking of the well-being of living beings, Prabhupāda decided to go to Purī. The next day at daybreak Prabhupāda started out for Purī. Priyācarana Dāsa Bābā was mortified at the news that Prabhupāda was going to Purī. But he did not put forward any sort of objection. In the morning, with two servants with him and the *bhaktas* from Bengal he left Vṛndāvana for the last time. After this, he was never able to return to the holy abode of Vṛndāvana while he was manifest.

The taxi taking Prabhupāda arrived at Palam Airport at around 10 o'clock. Meanwhile, four tickets had been bought and there were five people. Mitra Mahāśaya tried specially hard to get one more ticket. Because the Asian Games were in progress then, getting an extra ticket was difficult. Around that time one of the high office holding employees at the airport came to see Prabhupāda. When he saw Prabhupāda he was enchanted. By then, Mitra Mahāśaya had returned, unable to acquire another ticket. Fortunately, however, an extra ticket was quickly acquired with the help of that employee. When the time for the plane's departure arrived, Prabhupāda was boarded and seated with the help of a few people. At the scheduled time the plane taxied for the sky.

The plane arrived at the Bhuvaneśvar airport at around 2 o'clock in the afternoon. After that, the *bhaktas* started towards Purī in a taxi with Prabhupāda. The news of Prabhupāda's coming arrived before he did. He arrived in Purī and went to the temple of Ṭotā Gopīnātha to stay. Since the news of his coming had spread, the *bhaktas* living in Purī began to come to Ṭotā Gopīnātha with great enthusiasm. The room at the temple in which Prabhupāda stayed was not very healthy because little light and air were able to enter it. One day the abbot of the Haridāsa Māṭha, Nitāi Dāsa Bābājī, came to see Prabhupāda. Seeing that Prabhupāda was staying in a room without sunlight, he invited him to come with him to the Haridāsa Māṭha. Prabhupāda accepted with great joy. After this a fine room at the Māṭha of the tomb of Haridāsa, which had

lots of exposure to the light and air and lots of room for him to walk about in, was reserved for him. The very next day Prabhupāda moved from Ṭoṭā Gopīnātha to the Haridāsa Maṭha. The abbot of the Haridāsa Maṭha, Nitāi Dāsa Bābājī, was determined with all his heart and soul that Prabhupāda should not feel any sort of difficulty or discomfort.

With the coming of many *bhaktas* to see Prabhupāda from various places in Bengal after they received news he was in Purī, Haridāsa Maṭha was floating in waves of bliss. Even before this time, because of cataracts in Prabhupāda's eyes, he was not able to see very well. The *bhaktas* of Nīlācala brought an eye specialist to see him. Since the cataract in one eye was greater, the doctor recommended an operation. On the appointed day the operation was performed by an eye specialist from Bhuvaneśvara. Though two months after the operation Prabhupāda had more or less recovered, still because of a small mistake in the operation, he did not get his full vision back.

Meanwhile, many *bhaktas* began to arrive from various places for Prabhupāda's birth day. On the day of the celebration, Vaiṣṇavas from all the four religious communities (*sampradāya*) of Nīlācala were invited. Apart from that, many holy men and residents of Nīlācala were satisfied with grace-food and took their leave. In bliss such as this three months went by. Now it was time to change locations.

After receiving the news of Prabhupāda's presence in Nīlācala, a few *bhaktas* of Navadvīpa came to Nīlācala with the intention of taking him to Navadvīpa. At first Prabhupāda did not show any special interest in going to Navadvīpa. But, at the despair-filled pleading of the *bhaktas* from Navadvīpa he agreed to go to Navadvīpa. The *bhaktas* reserved a seat for him in an air-conditioned car of the Purī Express. On the appointed day Prabhupāda took his leave of the *bhaktas* of Nīlācala and went to the Purī station. The primary ritual specialist (*pūjārī*) of the Jagannātha Temple came there and put the silk rope of Jagannātha on Prabhupāda on him. At the scheduled time, the train for Kolkatta departed. With tears in their eyes the residents of Nīlācala bid farewell to Prabhupāda.

News of Prabhupāda's coming to Navadvīpa had been sent previously. After receiving the news, the *bhaktas* of Navadvīpa were waiting for Prabhupāda at the Howrah station. The *bhaktas* of Kolkatta also came to the Howrah station after hearing the news. When the train arrived at the platform, there was great excitement among them all. When the train

stopped Prabhupāda was escorted off the train and seated in a taxi decorated with flower garlands. The Kolkatta *bhaktas* offered their prostrations to Prabhupāda and then attended on him. Then the car departed for Navadvīpa with Prabhupāda.

Countless people, having received news of Prabhupāda's auspicious coming, were waiting for him with impatient enthusiasm at the Rādhāvallabha Temple. When Prabhupāda arrived in Navadvīpa there was unprecedented excitement in every direction. After so long their own great man had returned to Navadvīpa. Because his body was not well, this time no arrangements were made for Prabhupāda to stay on the bank of the Gaṅgā. Instead it was arranged for him to stay in a house nearby the Rādhāvallabha Temple.

With Prabhupāda's auspicious arrival, in each neighborhood *saṅkīrtana* parties of the holy name were formed. Each *saṅkīrtana* party would circumambulate in the morning, performing *saṅkīrtana*, and then come to the Rādhāvallabha Temple. As soon as morning began, one after another, *saṅkīrtana* parties filling the air with the names of Hari began to arrive at the Rādhāvallabha Temple to see Prabhupāda. In such a way at that time a hundred morning *saṅkīrtana* parties were created. In each party the number of young boys and young men was greater [than all the other age groups]. Also at that time, there were regular readings of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in the afternoons and at night there was singing Vaiṣṇava songs.

Previously Prabhupāda did not give initiation to anyone very quickly. But this time, coming to Navadvīpa, he became different. If someone desired to receive initiation he began to give initiation. As a result, at that time there was a rush to receive initiation and Prabhupāda without any difficulty began to give it.

News of Prabhupāda's arrival in Navadvīpa even reached Manoharpur. Some *bhaktas* came to Navadvīpa with special enthusiasm intending to take him to Manoharpur. If Prabhupāda goes to Manoharpur, he will never return to Navadvīpa—with this worry the *bhaktas* of Navadvīpa did not want to let Prabhupāda go to Manoharpur. After receiving the promise that after visiting Manoharpur Prabhupāda will again return to Navadvīpa, he was decided to go to Manoharpur. On the appointed day Prabhupāda started out for Manoharpur with some servants and *bhaktas*.

Prabhupāda's son-in-law, Anil Kumar Bandyopadhyay, lived in Arambag in the district of Hugli. He made arrangements on behalf of the

residents of Arambag for Prabhupāda to visit there for a little while on his way to Manoharpur. The weekly paper of Arambag had previously announced the news of Prabhupāda's coming. Many people gathered there for Prabhupāda's auspicious arrival. For Prabhupāda's visit a high platform was constructed so that everyone would be able to see him from afar. In honor of his coming *saikīrtana* of the names of Hari was arranged in advance. Everyone was beside themselves with enthusiasm in expectation of his visit. At that time the car carrying Prabhupāda with his *bhaktas* arrived there. Prabhupāda stayed there for two hours before starting out again for Manoharpur.

After receiving the news of Prabhupāda's auspicious coming to Manoharpur a *saikīrtana* party from Manoharpur was waiting for him. In time, the car passed through Ghāṭāl and headed in the direction of Manoharpur. Seeing that Prabhupāda's car was coming the *bhaktas* of Manoharpur began to perform loudly *saikīrtana* of the names of Hari. Countless villagers wishing to see him were standing along both sides of the road waiting. The car began to move forward slowly. In order to give everyone a chance to see him the car would stand still for a while and then again move slowly forward. In front was the *saikīrtana* party; behind it slowly moving was the car with Prabhupāda. Gradually it arrived at the Gaura-Balarāma Temple in Manoharpur.

At Prabhupāda's instruction arrangements were made for his wife, Sarasvatī Devī, to stay at a *bhakta*'s house in Ghāṭāl. After many days Prabhupāda had returned to Manoharpur. In less than a hour this news was spread far and wide. Everyday numerous villagers, beside themselves with excitement hoping to see him, came to Manoharpur from many distant places. So that everyone would receive grace-food lavish arrangements were made. Since they came from afar by foot, many *bhaktas* spent the night in the *ashram*. When morning came they returned to their own homes. In this way because of the arrival in the *ashram* of people day and night, it was always full. At night many people stayed in the audience hall. Those who did not find a place in the audience hall laid themselves down under the open sky along with their sons and daughters. At night there was an unprecedent sight—hundreds of people—wives, children, and the old—laying down wherever they could find a place and going to sleep where they were. Near someone's foot was someone's head; beneath them the soil and above the open sky. They were pleased with just having a sight of Prabhupāda. In this way, hundreds of people, willing even to accept many discomforts, came to see Prabhupāda. As long as Prabhupāda was in Manoharpur the ashram

was always full because of the ceaseless arrival of people.

As long as Prabhupāda stayed at Manoharpur, it was as if a Rājasūya sacrifice⁹ were being performed in the *ashram*. Many poor villagers used to come right at the time to receive grace-food and after receiving it in the joy of love would depart. If one sat down, one received grace-food. There was no restriction or obstacle at all.

There was an incident during this time. One of Prabhupāda's childhood friends came to see him. It was then wintertime. Since there had been no rain the farmers' worries had no limits. Because of lack of water, it was not possible to plant the crops. The proper time for planting was slipping by. Prabhupāda's childhood friend said to him: "Look, Gosāñi! Haven't I heard that you are a great accomplished [perfected] soul? So give us a sample once of your accomplishment. In the next two days, if rain comes then I will know that you really are an accomplished being. And if rain does not come, Gosāñi, I will not believe anything people say about you. I will grab a hold of you and throw you into the pond." Prabhupāda, after hearing his words, began to laugh softly. It was then noted: the very next day it rained down mallets and clubs. The farmers' anxiety was ended. The earth, too, warmed by the rays of the sun and bathed by the rain showers, blossomed.

In Manoharpur, too, Prabhupāda gave initiation without discrimination. It was as if the door of his compassion had been flung open. The time arrived for him to say goodbye to Manoharpur. *Bhaktas* came from Navadvīpa to take Prabhupāda back. The *bhaktas* of Manoharpur, shedding tears again and again, bid him farewell. Prabhupāda, with his *bhaktas* and servants, started out for Navadvīpa again.

Prabhupāda indeed returned to Navadvīpa, but he was not like he was before. He began to always keep absorbed inside himself. He nearly completely gave up eating. This time Prabhupāda became very nearly like a child. With much explaining perhaps he would eat a little food and he always would close his eyes. He had no knowledge of what food he was eating. Closing his eyes whatever was before his hand he would put in his mouth. Perhaps he did not like it. Then he would spit it out wherever he could. At that time only a little curds and apple boiled would be given to Prabhupāda. Sometimes perhaps at night in the second *prahara* he used to say: "I'm hungry." His servant would light a lamp that night give Prabhupāda something to eat like milk sweets.

⁹The royal crowning ritual of ancient Hindu culture.

Just as much food as a six month old baby would eat, Prabhupāda would eat. If one begged him to have more, he would display lack of desire.

Previously one operation on Prabhupāda's eye had taken place, but since he could not see well by means of that, at his wish an appointment was made for an operation on the cataract of the other eye. Before the coming of cold weather, on the appointed day, the operation was performed by the famous Indian eye specialist, Dr. I. S. Ray.

After the operation the condition of Prabhupāda's body gradually began to worsen. He also gradually became more inward minded. Because of the cold weather Prabhupāda began to experience special difficulty with breathing. Some *bhaktas* started to encourage Prabhupāda to go to Puri. On the other hand, the *bhaktas* of Navadvīpa were not willing to allow him to go anywhere besides Navadvīpa. As a result a difference of opinion appeared between the two sides. Then, Prabhupāda expressed a desire to go to Puri again. Dilip Kumar Mitra Mahāśaya came with a car from Kolkātā to take Prabhupāda to Puri. On the designated day, Prabhupāda, with a group of his servants, started out for the holy abode of Puri once more.

The car sped along towards the Howrah station. A first class ticket had been reserved for Prabhupāda on the Puri Express. The Puri Express would depart around seven in the evening. Meanwhile, because of a traffic jam on Kolkātā's Central Avenue Prabhupāda's car sat for over an hour. The time for the departure of the Puri Express had nearly arrived. The *bhaktas* became extremely upset. Everyone will be unable to catch the train—this kind of worry arose in them. Then the subject of the greatest worry of all arose—if the train departs without them where will Prabhupāda spend the night? Even if he stayed somewhere, Prabhupāda would be faced with great discomfort because of his unwell body. At that kind of worry everyone became extremely anxious. Mitra Mahāśaya then began to console everyone, saying that when Prabhupāda was with them no kind of danger would arise.

In the meantime, seeing no possibility of becoming free from the traffic jam the driver of the car turned around and proceeded by some other route for the Howrah station. When the car was near the Howrah bridge it was an hour past the train's scheduled departure time. Everyone was sitting hopelessly, their faces pale and in their minds they began to think of various ways of resolving the problem.

After receiving news of Prabhupāda's trip to Nīlācala many *bhaktas* who lived in Kolkātā came to the Howrah station. Seeing that his arrival

was delayed the *bhaktas* were also upset and were waiting for him. As soon as the car carrying Prabhupāda entered Howrah station a *bhakta* raised his hand and stood in front of it. With great jpy he gave the news that the train from Karsed had not arrived at the platform. The train will leave two hours later than the scheduled time. After a great deal of inquiry the reason that the train from Karsed had not arrived at the platform could not be discovered. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

After this, Prabhupāda was taken and seated in a wheel chair. The *bhaktas* put a flower garland on his neck. In bliss many bowed to Prabhupāda and returned to their homes. After a little while the train arrived at the platform. Everyone took Prabhupāda and got on the train. After a short while the train blow its horn and slowly started out towards Puri.

This time arrangements had been made at Haridāsa Maṭha for Prabhupāda's stay. At the news of Prabhupāda's coming Haridāsa Maṭha was again like before resonant with the sounds of the arrival of *bhaktas*. Although this time Prabhupāda experienced good health for a few days after his arrival in Nīlācala, after passing those few days he became even more ill than before. He began to be examined by specialists of that place, but his illness gradually began to increase. One day Prabhupāda's condition suddenly become extremely serious; he became unconscious. In three days forty-two injections were given. After three days Prabhupāda slowly became conscious again. Meanwhile, news of Prabhupāda's illness was sent to Navadvīpa by telegram. Though indeed Prabhupāda became gradually somewhat better, he remained so internally focused that he was not even aware of his body.

There was no string of beads for the holy name in his hand, but Prabhupāda was moving his fingers and doing *japa*. He was thinking in his mind that there was a string of beads in his hand. A servant would perhaps come to him with grace-food; Prabhupāda would extend his empty hand and say "Take my mālā." That servant would perhaps take hold of his hand and say "Bābā, I have taken your beads. Now have some grace-food." Since he was so inwardly turned Prabhupāda was not able to eat grace-food properly. With no other choice, his servants used to feed him with their own hands. At that time one could say that he was not really eating. It is doubtful whether in a whole day he ate even fifty grams of curd. From that time on Prabhupāda never again held a holy name *mālā*. One day grace-food was brought for Prabhupāda. He was moving his empty hand doing *japa*. His servant said: "Bābā, I brought grace-food." Prabhupāda with his eyes closed said: "Wait! Let me finish my round."

Even though there was no *mālā* in his hand, he thought "I am chanting on a *mālā*." When the *mālā* was complete, the Sumeru or the central bead came; then one can put the *mālā* aside. With this kind of expectation, Prabhupāda was waiting for Sumeru. But without a *mālā* where will Sumeru come from? Then a *bhakta* said: "Bābā! You have no *mālā* in your hand." Prabhupāda raised his empty hand and said: "Then this that I am doing japa on, what is it?" Everyone began to laugh. Another servant said: "Bābā! That is your mind's *mālā*." Prabhupāda this time became for a moment externally aware. What Prabhupāda was doing at this time was the result of his previous practice. His external memory was practically non-existent.

At night sometimes he would pass urine. After a servant washed his feet Prabhupāda would think that dawn had come. He then went to bathe. Now it would be time to meditate on the *mantras*. Sitting on his bed he would instruct his servant to bring his *pañcapātra*. When the servant brought the *pañcapātra*, Prabhupāda would wash his mouth (*ācamana*) and sit to meditate on his *mantras*. The servant would then say: "Bābā! It is now twelve at night. Is this the time to meditate?" Prabhupāda would then become a little externally aware. He would say: "Oh! It is, isn't it. Therefore, shall I lie down now?"

One day would have been one in the morning. Prabhupāda urinated and when his servant was his feet and dried them he sat on the bed and asked for his *pañcapātra*. His servant said: "Bābā! It is now one in the morning. Is now the time to remember mantras?" Prabhupāda was then so much more internally focused that the words of his servant did not even enter his ears. He asked for his *pañcapātra* again and again. After that when his servant brought his *pañcapātra*, rinsed his mouth and sat to remember the mantras. Catching hold of the sacrificial thread¹⁰ over his shoulder, he thought it was his string of beads for the holy names. He began to do *japa* with it. When the sacrificial thread became obstructed Prabhupāda thought that his beads had gotten twisted. When that happened, he began to get irritated. Then the servant would loosen and move the sacrificial thread over his shoulder. In this way the sacrificial thread became stuck and the servant loosened it again and again. In this way, nearly an hour passed. After that the servant again said: "Bābā! It is one in the morning. Is this the time for remembering mantras?" This time his external awareness returned. He said with amazement: "What's that? It's now one in the morning? Then, should I go to bed?"

¹⁰The thread given to members of the uppercastes at the time of their Vedic initiations.

The servant said reassuringly: "Yes, Bābā! Go to bed now."

At that time Prabhupāda kept his eyes closed all the time. Sometimes, while keeping his eyes closed he would say: "I am not able to see anything. Everything is dark." His servant would say: "Bābā! Your eyes are closed. How will you see anything? Open your eyes." Prabhupāda then trying to open his eyes would say: "Yes, I can see a little bit." Such was internal absorption that he used to stay in.

Meanwhile, receiving news of Prabhupāda's illness, *bhaktas* from Navadvīpa came to Nīlācala. Seeing that Prabhupāda's medical treatment was specially problematic they begged to take him back to Navadvīpa. Prabhupāda knew that the time of the end of his sport was drawing near, therefore, wishing to leave his destructible body in the holy abode of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, he accepted the proposal without any argument. The *bhaktas*, too, with great enthusiasm purchased a ticket on the Puri Express with the intention of taking Prabhupāda to Navadvīpa.

There are two things worthy of mention that occurred before the day Prabhupāda departed for Navadvīpa. One night at about one in the morning, Prabhupāda began to talk with one of his servants about his childhood and place of birth. He talked about his childhood days in Manoharpur. The servant listening to those incidents in his childhood life from Prabhupāda's own lips considered it grace. On top of that beginning from a few days earlier that same servant's left eye began to dance about in a violent way. He then was able to realize that Prabhupāda, his highest shelter, was ending his earthly sport.

On the appointed day, Prabhupāda started out for the holy abode of Navadvīpa with his *bhaktas*. The residents of Nīlācala bid him farewell their hearts tormented by pain.

After arriving in Navadvīpa from Nīlācala Prabhupāda was more or less well for a few days. But, compared to before, he was much more absorbed in his own inner world. If one were to say that he practically did not speak at all, it would be accurate. At that time, since he was unable to move his legs, he had to be lifted into standing position and then seated. He was also not aware of whether it was day or night. One day at around twelve midnight some *bhaktas* said: "Bābā, it is time to go to bed." In reply Prabhupāda said: "Do I ever sleep in the middle of the day?"

In the meantime, because Prabhupāda experienced greater difficulty in breathing, arrangements were made to give him oxygen. Although

because of that he felt some relief, nevertheless his condition began to become more serious. One day a letter arrived from Vṛndāvana. It was written by Kiśorīdāsa Bābā of Keśīghāṭ Thor. He wrote: "Bābā, I had a dream one night in which a dark-skinned boy to me said: 'Hey! You sent Gosvāmī home in the middle of a seven-reading of the *Bhāgavata* and you did not bring him back. Go, quickly arrange to bring him back to Vṛndāvana.' I asked him: 'Who are you?' That boy replied: 'I am Murārimohana.' After saying that the boy disappeared. Bābā, come immediately to Vṛndāvana as soon as you read this letter." After hearing the contents of that letter Prabhupāda did not speak with anyone again, did not even open his eyes again.

Two days went by in that way. In the afternoon of the third day Prabhupāda developed a fever and with that his body began to shiver. His pulse too went from weak to weaker. His blood pressure decreased from around 140 to stay around 80. Dr. Bhaumik Mahāśaya informed one of his servants of the serious condition Prabhupāda was in. Arrangements were made to give him oxygen at night. After hearing the news, one Prabhupāda's disciples, Dr. Balarām Datta of the Kāṭoyā Hospital, also came. Dr. Bhaumik spent the night near Prabhupāda and there was no limit to the worry of the *bhaktas*.

Daybreak was not far off and Prabhupāda's servants were one by one completing their morning ablutions. The thought of remembering mantras was not on anyone's mind. That day one *bhakta* had made arrangements for *sādhu-bhāṇḍārā* in the temple, but no one was paying attention to that. Gradually, Prabhupāda's heartbeat began to weaken. Receiving the news that Prabhupāda's condition was critical, Prabhupāda Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī from Śrīvās Arīgan came to see him. It was then about 7:00 in the morning. One servant began to repeat the holy names loudly at Prabhupāda's feet. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī embraced Prabhupāda and saying "Jaya Nitāi! Jaya Nitāi," began to weep. Some other *bhaktas* started to perform *saṅkīrtana* of the holy names in audience hall of the temple. The hour reached 8:30 am. Prabhupāda's lips suddenly began to quiver. Uttering "Jaya Nityānanda Rām! Jaya Nityānanda Rām" in a barely audible voice, he gave up his destructible body and becoming situated in a body of consciousness he started out for the divine, blissful, non-material, eternal sport. In all directions the sounds of wailing arose.

Receiving the news of Prabhupāda's disappearance, countless people came running from all directions. In a short while the news of his disappearance spread everywhere. Countless people came weeping from

all directions to have sight of him for the last time. In this way viewings and obeisances continued until three in the afternoon. Many *bhaktas* came to Navadvīpa even from Kolkātā after they received the news.

After that it was decided that a palanquin should be brought for a procession through the streets of Navadvīpa with Prabhupāda's dead body and after it was decorated in a very beautiful way with flower garlands the procession began. Behind it innumerable people followed singing the holy names. When the procession reached the main road, because of the gathering of some many people, the movement of lorries, buses, rikshaws, and such was stopped. On both sides of the road countless people watched that beautiful procession from their verandas and roofs. If one looked upon it from a high place, no matter how far one could see, the road itself could no longer be seen; only the heads of innumerable people were seen. In this way after processing for three or four hours, the beautiful parade arrived back at the Rādhāvallabh temple at around seven in the evening.

Prabhupāda's son, Vṛndāvana Gosvāmī had at that time gone to the house of one of his disciples. Someone was sent to bring him back. The night before the day on which Prabhupāda left his body, Vṛndāvana Gosvāmī had had a dream in which Prabhupāda said to him: "Hey! Come home right away." Seeing this kind of dream, Vṛndāvana Gosvāmī became specially disturbed. The very next day the messenger came to him with the news that Prabhupāda had disappeared. In a short while he set out and arrived back in Navadīpa at around twelve midnight.

Meanwhile, how the final rites for Prabhupāda's corpse were to be performed was being debated among all the guru-brothers. One party argued that the rites should be performed on the bank of the Ganges. Another party said that no, they should be performed near the temple. After this, in agreement with the opinion of Prabhupāda Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī of Śrīvās Āṅgan, it was decided that his final rites should be performed on the bank of the Ganges where Prabhupāda previously used to do private worship.

By then it was one o'clock in the morning. The *bhaktas* carried Prabhupāda's corpse to the bank of the Ganges. A pile of wood was prepared. The body of Prabhupāda's human sport was washed with Ganges water and new clothes were put on it. Sacred markings were put on the twelve upper limbs and it was laid out on the arrangement of wood. The sounds of mṛḍaṅga, symbols, and the holy names broke the silence

of the late night on the bank of the Ganges and spread far into the distance. The bank of the Ganges was a dense forest of people. Slowly Prabhupāda's form in his human sport was turned into ashes. One very bright star in India's auspicious spiritual firmament went out. Overwhelmed with sorrow the *bhaktas* brought water from the Ganges in hundreds and hundreds of pots and silently cooling the cremation ashes, returned to their homes.

Meanwhile the news of Prabhupāda's wrapping up his earthly sport reached the holy land of Śrī Vṛndāvana. A dense darkness descended among the *bhaktas* residing in Vṛndāvana. Among them one of Prabhupāda's Vraja disciples at Premasarovara had a dream at night in which Prabhupāda told him: "My time for departure has arrived. I'm going. Don't be sad." The resident of Vraja becoming troubled by the sight of that kind of dream went to Nityānanda Dhām in Cākaleśvar and heard that it was true. Prabhupāda had gone to the eternal abode.

Even now one can hear from the lips of Vrajavāsīs: "Bābā! We have never seen a *sādhu* like that. A bābā indeed was that Tinkaḍi Bābā." Even today as they talk about Bābā their throats get choaked up and their eyes fill with tears. They have lost one of their own great ones, Tinkaḍi Bābā.

Part I

Prabhupāda's Sweet Nature

Various Supernatural Incidents and Traits

A Miraculous Event

At one time Prabhupāda was staying at some place near Kokilāvana. Suddenly, he wanted to move to another place. The *bhaktas* were wondering how he would be able to make such a move. Then at Prabhupāda's instruction a *bhakta* went to a Vrajavāsī by the name Jīvanlāl Netājī of Baḍa Baithān. He had a tractor. The *bhakta* revealed Prabhupāda's desire to move to another place and requested him to take Prabhupāda there by tractor. At that time all the wheat was ripe and he was threshing the wheat with his tractor. That Vrajavāsī thought to himself about it and realized that if he stopped the threshing and took Prabhupāda where he wanted to go he would loose about two hundred rupees per day. Thinking in this way he did not agree to the request. With no other choice the *bhakta* went back to Prabhupāda. A little while after the *bhakta* arrived back, one piece of cloud came and right where that Vrajavāsī was threshing his wheat it began raining down like a shower of clubs and everything became soaking wet. That wheat would not be able to be threshed for at least two days. That Vrajavāsī searched around and saw that the rain did not fall anywhere else. Then, thinking that this was the result of his not agreeing to move Prabhupāda and with great dispatch he brought his tractor moved Prabhupāda. That was not all. He offered himself at Prabhupāda's feet and became his disciple.

Protecting With His Subtle Body

That same Jīvanlāl of Bāda Baithān was travelling along a road one day. Behind him came a tractor. When the tractor got very close to him, as he went to stand off to the side he tripped and fell. Right along with that the first wheel of the tractor rolled over Jīvanlāl's waist. Jīvanlāl screamed: "Jaya Gurudev!" and lost consciousness. Before the big back wheel of the tractor could crush him, however, the tractor tipped over for no apparent reason. The incident was over in an instant. After that, Jīvanlāl was taken unconscious to the hospital. His condition was extremely serious. Jīvanlāl was unconscious in the hospital for three days. The bones of his midsection were broken and he had been placed in a cast. When after three days Jīvanlāl returned to consciousness, he saw that Prabhupāda was slowly circling around him with his holy name beads in his hands. Prabhupāda said to him: "Don't you worry. You will be fine." Jīvanlāl beckoned to Prabhupāda asking him to sit and then fell unconscious again. When he again became conscious, he, just as before, saw Prabhupāda circling him. This time he touched him on the head with the string of beads in his hands. Like this, for three days Jīvanlāl saw Prabhupāda in the hospital. With words of reassurance like "Don't worry; you will recover," Jīvanlāl became free from his fears. After staying for forty-five days in that way in the hospital, the bandage around his waist was removed. Then the nurses tried to get Jīvanlāl to stand up, but without any success. He was completely unable to stand up on his own. After that the doctors were lead to the firm conclusion that he would never be able to walk again. At everyone's crying Jīvanlāl realized that he would not be able to move his legs again. Then Jīvanlāl began to weep with a troubled heart. Again and again he asked at Prabhupāda's feet why he had survived. Now for the rest of his life he would have to be a burden on others. Everyone would only think of him as dead weight. Thinking is this way he began to cry out loudly "Bābā! Why have I survived?" Suddenly he saw that Prabhupāda was standing behind him. Prabhupāda said: "Don't you worry about anything. You will certainly be fine." Saying this Prabhupāda disappeared and at his words of reassurance Jīvanlāl became peacedul.

Three days after that incident Jīvanlāl actually became able to stand with the help of crutches and slowly, placing his weight on the crutches, he was able to move his legs. After some more days had passed Jīvanlāl became able to move about on his own [without the crutches]. The doctors were speechless. They could not imagine that this was possible.

Then, after Jīvanlāl returned to his home, he wanted to know where Prabhupāda was staying. After asking around he learned that Prabhupāda had gone to Navadvīpa a few months previously.

When fluid began to build in the spinal column of one of Prabhupāda's very special disciples named Caitanyacaraṇ Pāl of Barackpore near Kolkatta, he had to be taken to the hospital in very serious condition. The doctors examined him and began a treatment that had little hope of his survival. The spinal column was pierced and the fluid was released. When received the news one bābājī of Vṛndāvana (a relative of Caitanyacaraṇ Pāl) went to Bengal to see him. Caitanya Pāl was then in the hospital in a state of unconsciousness. His relatives went to the hospital in order to visit him. That bābājī too arrived at the hospital. Caitanya Pāl's condition was then extremely serious. Just at the most dangerous time that bābājī saw that Prabhupāda was standing at his head. Prabhupāda touch Caitanya Pāl's head with the string of japa beads in his hands and disappeared. Witnessing that sort of sight that bābājī became extremely amazed.

After that incident, by Prabhupāda's supernatural influence Caitanya Pāl began to get gradually better. The doctors had firmly decided that that patient was not in any way going to survive, but seeing his return to health they were thoroughly dumbfounded.

In midst of this incident another unprecedeted thing happened. That Caitanya Pāl before he became unconscious asked that his japa beads be put in his hands. That was done. The extraordinary thing was that when Caitanya Pāl was unconscious and was wrestling with death, even then the beads in his hands kept on moving. The doctors seeing this amazing phenomenon were astounded. After he returned home Caitanya Pāl wrote a letter to Prabhupāda saying: "Bābā! It was as if there were some unseen power chanting three lakhs of the holy names through me every day while I was unconscious."

Once one of Prabhupāda's disciples, a teacher from Burdwan, suddenly saw as he was walking down a path Prabhupāda beckoning to him. After a moment he disappeared. The *bhakta* was astonished and after some inquiry learned that Prabhupāda was then staying in Navadvīpa. Without any further delay he went to Navadvīpa and when he was with Prabhupāda told of the incident. In response Prabhupāda said: "Yes. I was thinking about you."

In this way there are many incidents of Prabhupāda's moving about

in his subtle body. For fear of making the book too large I have not written about them. One of his servants asked Prabhupāda one day about this moving around in his subtle body and in response he said: "That's nothing. That's such an ordinary thing." The servant was speechless with amazement. Thinking "would such an uncommon thing be that," he became bewildered.

Acquiring By Wish Alone

This incident occurred once. Prabhupāda was then residing at Rasaulī. One day some *sannyāsīs* arrived there. Prabhupāda invited them to have grace-food and in response they said that they ate only fruit. And even among fruit they listed all the names of fruit that at that time under no circumstances could possibly be gathered. Prabhupāda was worried. After that he asked them to return after bathing. At just that time a Śeṭha (merchant) came by car to visit Prabhupāda. He gave to Prabhupāda the all the various fruit that the *sannyāsīs* had previously listed and bowing before him, returned to his home. The *sannyāsīs* completed their baths and rituals and returned. When grace-food of the very types of fruit they had requested was distributed to them they were extremely amazed and while praising Prabhupāda enormously they returned to their homes with gladness in their faces.

An Unprecedented Incident

Once Prabhupāda was residing with his *bhaktas* at a lonely place called Pāṇḍavagaṅgā not far from Kokilāvana. At Pāṇḍavagaṅgā there is a pond and in that pond there were many lotus plants. When Prabhupāda was residing there there were no blossoming lotuses in the pond. One day in the afternoon there was a reading of the *Bhāgavata* on the bank of that pond. Prabhupāda was sitting nearby. At that time it was noticed that two blossoming lotus flowers slowly moved from two opposite edges of the pond and met one another in the middle. As long as the reading went on the two lotuses were joined together. When the reading was over the two lotus flowers slowly moved apart in opposite directions. Everyone saw this and was extremely amazed.

Curing Disease by Compassionate Glance

By Prabhupāda's ordinary glance of compassion many were freed from difficult situations.

At one time one of his servants was suffering from a fever for some days. Suddenly one day in the morning his hands and legs became uncontrollable. Raising his hand he was unable to take hold of anything. Seeing no other recourse he went to Prabhupāda and told him of his condition. Prabhupāda told him that it was a symptom of palsy. Prabhupāda reassured him saying: "Don't worry about it at all. Everything will be fine." Indeed, in a few days that servant health gradually returned.

Another time another servant had a fever. Because of the severity of the fever the servant was practically unconscious for a few days. After three days the fever increased even more. The servant then with great difficulty went to Prabhupāda and told him of his suffering: Prabhupāda said: "Don't worry even a little bit. Put water on your head and you will become fine." The servant did that. It was noted that even without any treatment in a few hours that servant began to feel well again.

Grace Through Dreams

Prabhupāda was then residing in Navadvīpa. At that time every day many used to recite books on *bhakti* for Prabhupāda. Among those reciters was one named Suresh Mukherjee who used to recite for Prabhupāda. He again had a stomach disease. At that time because his stomach ache increased [his diarrhea increased] he was not able to recite for Prabhupāda for three days. Because of that he felt great torment in his mind. On the fourth day at night he had a dream in which Prabhupāda came to him and said: "Suresh, where is your pain. Show me." Suresh showed him his stomach. Prabhupāda then rubbed his hand on his stomach and said: "No, no. You have nothing there. Now you have become well." Indeed, after he woke from sleep he no longer felt any pain in his stomach. Not only that. He was free of disease for a long time.

Ability to Know of Things From Far

About thirty years earlier a *bhakta* came from Kolkata to Vṛndāvana to visit Prabhupāda. At that time he did not have initiation. Prabhupāda was then staying at Rādhākuṇḍa. As soon as that *bhakta* came into Prabhupāda's presence, Prabhupāda told him: "You have stayed here even now? You should return to your home immediately. One of your sons has died." That *bhakta* quickly returned to his home and saw that indeed one of his sons had passed away.

Knowing Mental States by His Supernatural Power

I noticed that in Prabhupāda there was some supernatural power by which he was somehow able to know a person's mental states.

One day a servant of Prabhupāda went to circumambulate Girirāja. When he reached Pucharī he met with his older guru-brother, Gopāladāsa Bābājī. Gopāladāsa Bābājī gave some grace-food from Jayapur's Govindajī to that younger bābājī to give to Prabhupāda. When he was returning with that grace-food a boy of Vraja he met on the path said: "Bābā, give me some grace-food." That servant thought to himself "how many ways does Bhagavān test the practitioner? Perhaps this is Bhagavān in the form of a boy." Thinking in this way, he gave that boy one sweet and then started on again. After going a little further another boy approached him and asked for grace-food. He also gave him a sweet from the grace-food. After that he arrived at Rādhākuṇḍa and just as he was giving Prabhupāda the grace-food from Gopāladāsajī Prabhupāda said: "Look, if someone gives something to you for your gurudeva, you should not give any part of that to someone else before giving it to him."

Another time when a guru-brother had an altercation with that same servant he thought to himself after moving a good ways away from Prabhupāda: "No! There is no further need for me to serve my guru. I will go somewhere else." Then again he thought: "No, whatever mental anguish there may be, giving up one's service to one's guru and going somewhere elsewhere would just be foolish." As he was thus arguing with himself suddenly Prabhupāda roared at him: "You are arguing fiercely with yourself in your mind. That is very bad. By that you will be greatly harmed. I know about it all." The servant was stunned.

One other time that same servant, after placing some distance between himself and Prabhupāda, was thinking that if one's mind is not pure, service to one's guru does not really take place. He thus had no idea how many offences had occurred while serving his guru. In the end the burden of offences would be very heavy. Suddenly, Pabhupāda began to laugh and then he said: "How many times does a child in a mother's womb kick the mother. Is a sin for the child?"

On another day occurred this incident. That same servant used to massage Prabhupāda's body every night. One night just he touched him in order to give him a massage Prabhupāda said with anger: "Go away! Go do some *kīrtan!* Your service won't happen now." At this kind of statement from Prabhupāda the servant was struck to his heart. He began to think to himself that by touching Prabhupāda with his heart blemished Prabhupāda does not experience any happiness. Beyond that who knows how much pain he experiences in his body of clarity (*sāttvika śarīra*) as a result. Moreover, if one cannot perform even the most ordinary service for him will living near one's gurudeva, what is the use of leaving home in the first place? This kind of anxiety was poisoning his mind. He no longer performed *kīrtana*.

At that time that servant used to sleep by the side of Prabhupāda's bed and at night sleep no longer came to his eyes. Again and again only this topic arose in his mind and streams of tears began to flow. Then one night about about one o'clock. Prabhupāda suddenly began to call that servant's name: "Binode, Binode!" The servant was awake and he went near Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda said: "My body is aching something terrible. Give me a bit of a massage." Now the servant fell into a deeper difficulty. He thought that at his touch there will certainly be an experience of pain in Prabhupāda's clarified body. Therefore, how can he give him pain again by touching him? Prabhupāda again said: "My body is aching fiercely. Give me a massage."

One has to honor the orders of one's gurudeva. With no other recourse the servant while keeping his feet as far away as possible began to massage him. Prabhupāda said: "It is not working. Get on top of me and massage me more forcefully." The servant now began to get extremely anxious. How is that possible? Yet, there is no other way. Then he got on top of Prabhupāda's chest while keeping his head and feet as far away as possible and began to press on him harder than before. In addition, the servant began to worry that if his breath touched Prabhupāda's blessed body, there was no telling how much trouble it might

cause him. Prabhupāda again said: "It's not working. Put your complete body on top of me and press." After that the servant gave up all of his reservations and hesitation and pressed on Prabhupāda with his whole body. Prabhupāda said: "Now that right." In this way after five or ten minutes Prabhupāda: "Go now. Go back to bed." The next day Prabhupāda again called that servant and said: "Give my body a massage. It's aching a great deal."

Kṛṣṇa's Qualities in His Bhakta

Now I will endeavor to give some indication of the exemplary behavior and moral standards held by Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda's morality and exemplary practices a vast like an ocean. I, like an ant describing the ocean, am a source of hilarity even for children. Still, by the urging of my Śrī Gurudeva I will try to touch a drop of that ocean. Generous readers will purify the boldness of this lowest of human beings.

In the eighth and ninth verses of the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that: "One whose mind is satisfied by knowledge born of the instructions of scripture and the direct perception of the truth, who is unmoved in the presence of sense objects and in control of his senses, who sees a lump of mud, a stone, and a piece of gold as equal, and who looks upon a chum, a friend, an indifferent person, an enemy, someone despicable, a family member, a holy man and a sinner with equanimity, such a person is a *yogī* and the best of all." Prabhupāda's behavior was a match for this statement of the *Gītā*. Those who associated with Prabhupāda will certainly agree with this statement. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said in connection with the definition of a Vaiṣṇava:

All these qualities define a Vaiṣṇava.
 Can't mention them all; can just give a hint.
 Compassionate, unoffensive, truthful, equal,
 faultless, generous, gentle, pure, without possession,
 giving help to all, peaceful, sheltered only by Kṛṣṇa,
 desireless, unattached, steady, conqueror of the six qualities,
 moderate eater, unexcitable, respectful, not arrogant,
 deep, sympathetic, friendly, poetic, clever, silent.¹¹

¹¹Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, 2.22.44-7.

All of these Vaiṣṇava qualities described by the *Caitanya-caritāmṛtra* existed in Prabhupāda. I will try to demonstrate these qualities by means of particular incidents.

Compassion

Prabhupāda was the very image of compassion. He was always saddened at the misery of the living beings scorched as they were by the three flames and deluded by *māyā*. How much did he himself not suffer by taking on all the sins and sufferings of his disciples. Still, without hesitation he gave initiation to raise up thousands and thousands of living beings who were befuddled by *māyā* and in return he did not want anything. He was not affected in the least by his fame and high standing. Many times I heard Prabhupāda say with deep sadness: "When there is a celebration in the house of an important person relatives and friends are invited and they gather and eat the leftovers from the plate that person used. That is how those who are dear to Rādhārāṇī got their *prema-bhakti*, and to me she gave respect, worship, and high standing." Towards the wealth of his disciples he did not have the least interest. He himself also did not touch wealth. How many people were there who after bowing before him gave him wealth and yet he never used to even glance in that direction. Prabhupāda only gave. He did not ask for anything in return.

Once a young man from Kolkata took a vacation from his work and came to Vṛndāvana. When he came to see Prabhupāda Prabhupāda with effort kept him near him for a few days. After that when he revealed to that young man his desire to give him initiation, that young man as if enchanted by mantra agreed. On the appointed day he gave the fellow the initiation mantra. Prabhupāda's whole-hearted desire was that that young man not return any more to mundane world of illusion. When his vacation was over the young man made known to Prabhupāda his desire to return to his home. Prabhupāda did not give any reply. The very day that the young man was to start for home his mental attitude completely changed from the beginning of the day. He began to think:

Why should I return to mundane life? After gaining this rare human birth and then finding a genuine guru, if worship of Kṛṣṇa does not occur then what is the point of gaining such a birth? If enjoyment and pleasure are the main goals of living

beings then there is plenty of such enjoyment in births as animals. Is enjoyment the purpose of human life? And if in youth one does not worship Kṛṣṇa, then how can it be done in old age? "In youth one worships Kṛṣṇa out of a desire to have him. In middle age one worships Kṛṣṇa, out of desire or not out of desire. In old age one worships Kṛṣṇa out of fear of death." Therefore now is the best time. No more foolishness for wasting this human birth negligently out of a desire for the pleasures of false enjoyment.

This kind of thinking powerfully invaded his thoughts. On the other side there was his government job, his friends and relatives, to attract him. After a while he decided to give notice at his job and in the morning went to see Prabhupāda. At that time Prabhupāda was doing private worship in a solitary cottage by the slope of Govardhan and it was then about seven in the morning. Prabhupāda, after meditating on his mantras, would communicate as needed around nine in the morning. When that young man arrived at the slope of Govardhan he saw that Prabhupāda had come outside and was standing. It was as if he were waiting for someone. The young man went running up to Prabhupāda and rolling on the ground at his feet said that would not return again to his home. Hearing this Prabhupāda raised his hands and shouting "ho ho" loudly like a madman began to laugh. It appeared that when Prabhupāda's wish was fulfilled he showed that kind of delight. After that, that young man never more returned home. Resigning his job at Prabhupāda's request and changing his dress he attained Prabhupāda's service and became blessed.

By this incident it is very clear that if Prabhupāda had even least bit of greed he would not have told the young man to leave his job. Instead, he would have said that with wealth gathered in an honest way he should serve his guru. In this way only for the upliftment of the living beings he extended his grace and bestowed initiation.

At this time there was one *bhakta* who having lost for some reason the ability to see in his two eyes came to Prabhupāda in Vṛndāvana. Prabhupāda gave him initiation and instructed him to stay in Vṛndāvana and do private worship. At that that *bhakta* begged in an extreme dispair: "Bābā! I am blind. If I stay in Vṛndāvana who will look after me? I won't be able to beg for alms." In response Prabhupāda said "Enough with there is nobody. I am here. I will look after you." At this kind of

statement from Prabhupāda the *bhakta* began to weep. A little while after this, at Prabhupāda's instruction he changed his garb. Even until the present he is doing private worship in Prabhupāda's temple at Govardhana.

By this incident it is indicated that Prabhupāda was troubled by the sufferings of others without any self-interest and gave them initiation.

Compassionate Salvation from the Wombs of Ghosts

With extraordinary compassion Prabhupāda, through arranging for seven-day recitals of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, saved many living beings who had been born as ghosts.

Prabhupāda was then staying at Rādhākuṇḍa. One night Prabhupāda was lying down and one of his *bhaktas* was massaging his feet. It was about ten at night. The servant finishing his service went to have some grace-food. Prabhupāda had almost gone to sleep when suddenly he felt as if someone in the dark was massaging his feet. Prabhupāda was not able to see anything in the dark. Then he said: "Hey, who is it? Who are you?" and there was no answer. Prabhupāda again said: "Hey! Who are you who are massaging my feet?" When there was no answer Prabhupāda began to call loudly for his servant: "Gaura Govinda, Gaura Govinda!" His servant, hearing his call, put aside his grace-food, quickly entered his room, and asked why he was calling. Prabhupāda said: "Who is massaging my feet now?" The servant was extremely surprised. He had put the chain on the door from the outside when he had gone and at that time there was no one in his room. He said: "Who, Bābā? There was no one in the room." Then Prabhupāda understood that this was not result of any human being. It was heard that before it was sold someone had committed suicide in that house. At the beginnings of dark nights there used to be the sounds of someone walking on the roof. Even after much searching nothing was ever seen. After that Prabhupāda arranged for a seven-day recital of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* in that place for the redemption of that deceased soul. After that no other incident was heard of.

A bābājī who was one of Prabhupāda's disciples used to have a ghost always following after because of some mistake he committed. At that time, that bābājī used to do his private worship in a cottage near Uddhavakuṇḍa. Beginning after evening the mischief began to occur. Sometimes that

ghost would perhaps take the form of a horse and come and stand there and then as one watched it would change to the form of a cow. Sometimes it would take the form of a woman and stand there and then before one's eyes it would disappear. Sometimes in the dead of night it would forcefully shake the thatched hut of the bābājī. In various ways like this it would cause frights in the bābājī. The bābājī brought many exorcists and fakirs but to no avail. Gradually, the bābājī began to become sickly out of anxiety. One day the bābājī got a charm from an exorcist and wore it around his waist. One night after the sun went down, the bābājī was sitting. At that time that ghost push down his shoulder and took that charm from his waist. With no other recourse, he went to Prabhupāda and in distress told him all about the situation. Prabhupāda knew about it even before he was told. He instructed the bābājī to arrange for a seven-day recital of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*. The bābājī asking for alms from many places gathered three hundred rupees and gave it to Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda said: "Good. If there is any left over I will return it to you. Still, you have to fast the whole day and in a pure condition listen to the *Bhāgavata* seven-day recital." The bābāī agreed to that.

Prabhupāda at that time was staying near the slope of Girirāja (Govardhana). In order to perform the Bhāgavata Saptāha he brought Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī from Barsānā. On the second day of the Saptāha in the morning the bābājī in question was listing and a little further away another bābājī was sitting. The second bābājī noticed that the first bābājī seemed to be talking with someone with his hands folded and yet there was no third person there. The second bābājī was overcome with curiosity to know who the first bābājī was talking with and thus he asked him. That first bābājī told him the story half in Hindi and half in Bengali. Weeping profusely he said: "Look. You folks don't see. I see it all. Look there. That ghost is just standing here up till now. Till now it does not leave." Hearing his words the second bābājī could not decide whether he would laugh or cry. Anyway, on the evening of the third day after the beginning of the *Bhāgavata*'s recital, right at eight o'clock, that ghost broke the boundary wall of Prabhupāda's Govardhana āśrama from one end to the other and took its leave.

Once Prabhupāda was staying at a place called Hodel in the circle of Vraja. One day in the middle of the night someone began to call from outside in the voice of a woman: "Bābā, Bābā!" His servant went outside quickly but was unable to find anyone. It should have been mentioned before that Prabhupāda used not to sleep much at night. The servant asked Prabhupāda whether he had heard the woman's voice calling or

not. In reply, he said that he too heard it. The next day in the third watch of the night Prabhupāda had gone for his bath and with him sent a servant. At that time in the middle of the darkness was heard the call of that woman's voice "Bābā. Bābā." The servant after much searching was unable to find anyone and became extremely astonished. The next day when a Vrajavādī of Hodel came to see Prabhupāda they told him about the call in a woman's voice at night. In response the Vrajavāsī said that a few days previously a woman had committed suicide there. Then Prabhupāda realized that that women had come back as a ghost. After that Prabhupāda arranged for a seven-day recital of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* there and gave that ghostly soul liberation.

Not Harmful of Others

I have never heard that Prabhupāda in his life ever caused injury to anyone. Instead, if he came to know that anyone had caused him harm, he would regard himself as the great offender and feel sadness. Thus, Prabhupāda used to think that it was because of his own faults that others caused harm. It was seen that if anyone gave Prabhupāda even an ordinary glance askance and if he came to know of it, he would treat that person with so much more respect that, without seeing it, it would be hard to make someone understand with words. There was one bābājī in Vṛndāvana who used to engage in unseemly criticism of Prabhupāda. After Prabhupāda heard of that people when that bābājī used to come for a visit, Prabhupāda would try to give him great attention and affection. Such was the case that if he came to Prabhupāda, he would invite him to eat and having him seated nearby would feed him himself. Seeing that bābājī's cordial reception everyone was astonished. Another bābājī of Govardhana used to look askance at Prabhupāda. I have seen that Prabhupāda used to show him, too, respect with an inordinate amount of affection.

Once Prabhupāda was staying at a place named Akṣayavaṭa near Tapovana. The abbot of the Sītārāma Temple of that place was a Rāmānandī bābā. He did not look upon Prabhupāda with eyes of affection. Moreover, I have seen that Prabhupāda used to show that mahātmā uncommon respect. A holy man coming from Akṣayavaṭa to Tapovana arranged a distribution of food. Prabhupāda invited that Rāmānandī bābā of Akṣayavaṭa, but he did not agree to come. Then Prabhupāda instructed one of his servants to deliver a portion of that to the Rāmānandī

bābā and return. Not only that—he began to inquire again and again a portion had been sent or not. In this way I was aware many times of his absence of harmfulness. Prabhupāda was the very image of idea of absence of harm.

Essence of Truth

He made the only true object, the lotus feet of the Divine Couple, Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa the essence of his life. Saying that is more than enough.

Equable

Equable means seeing all living beings as equal. In other words, the one Lord resides in all living beings. One who perceives this attains a genuine condition of equal mindedness. This state of equal-mindedness is a characteristic of a great Bhāgavata or devotee of the Lord (Bhāgavān). In the *Gītā* the Lord says: “Hey Arjuna, let there be joy or let there be sorrow. A person who through similarity of self looks with an equal eye upon all is the best of yogīs. This is my opinion.” In Prabhupāda’s life this equal-mindedness existed in full measure. No matter who approached him and no matter what level they were on, he would show respect and honor to all in the same way.

Once Prabhupāda’s son Vṛndāvana Gosvāmī came to Vṛndāvana along with his dependents. I noticed that Prabhupāda did not show even the most ordinary joy at the coming of his son. When the young sons of Vṛndāvana Gosvāmī came near to Prabhupāda, he did not once turn and look at them. I saw that the way he behaved with ordinary people was the same way he behaved towards his own son and grandsons. The way he behaved towards those who were always engaged in his service was the same way he behaved towards ordinary people.

At one time Prabhupāda used to do private worship at the slopes of Girirāja. Near his cottage a sickly dog used to live. From time to time that dog would come into Prabhupāda’s cottage and eat the sweets given by his *bhaktas*. Prabhupāda seeing that never said a word.

One day in Prabhupāda’s temple in Govardhana there was a special offering of food. At Prabhupāda’s instruction a portion of that food was

sent to offer to Girirāja. After offering the food to Girirāja for two periods Prabhupāda instructed his servant "Take some luci and sweets and give them to that dog. All day the dog has not eaten anything. It's very hungry." The servant was amazed at Prabhupāda's equal-mindedness.

Even among holy men he did not distinguish who was higher and who was middling. Who took pleasure in private worship and who did not do private worship, this did not fall into his view. He thought of all without distinction as Vaiṣṇavas. Holy men of all communities and of all levels were to him objects of the same respect.

If true equal vision arises in someone, that is, if the direct perception that one God is present in all living beings occurs, not even an iota of malice remains in that person's mind. As a result no living being behaves violently towards that person either.

The Nonviolence of Living Beings Towards Prahbupāda

Prabhupāda performed his private worship even while living in the midst of many dangerous forest animals. But, no animal ever used to attack him.

One time Prabhupāda was living with a few *bhaktas* in a grove called Ratan Kuṇḍa not very far from a village called Candorī which was a few miles from the town of Chata. It was then winter. One day in the morning Prabhupāda was absorbed in private worship in an open space. It would have been around nine o'clock in the morning. A servant went to bring Prabhupāda a glass of sarbat and saw that a long poisonous snake had entered into Prabhupāda's body wrapping and was moving about. The tail of the snake was sticking out. Prabhupāda was immersed in relishing the rasa of the sports of the young couple in his meditation-intent mind. The servant seeing this kind of sight from a distance returned to the cottage. After a little while the servant again returned and saw that the snake was taking his leave from Mahārāja. The servant, too, breathed a sigh of relief.

In Tapovana Prabhupāda used to do his private worship under a Pilu tree. That place was the habitat of many poisonous snakes. Even in the face of many entreaties, he selected that place as the best place for private worship. One day a servant saw that above Prabhupāda's head a cobra had spread its hood and was swinging back and forth.

Prabhupāda with a placid expression on his face just remained in the bliss of private worship.

Even the crooks, thieves, and thugs did not give trouble to Prabhupāda. One time Prabhupāda was staying in Tapovana. On the news of Prabhupāda's presence there, too, many wealthy people used to come and go. As a result, suspecting that there was a lot of wealth with Prabhupāda, a gang of thieves appeared before Prabhupāda one day at twelve o'clock at night armed with guns and pistols. Prabhupāda in a very calm way offered them places to sit and asked them sit down. Then Prabhupāda asked whether they had eaten or not. In response they admitted that they were indeed hungry. Prabhupāda called a servant and asked him to arrange food for them. In a little while the food was ready and he fed the gang of thieves until they were satisfied. Seeing this kind of heart-felt, affectionate behavior the gang of thieves forgot their purpose in coming. Then they thinking about returning home, bid farewell to Prabhupāda. Prabupāda, looking on them with affection like he would his own people, forbid their going so late at night and requested that they stay there with him. How would the thieves be able to depart? They then offered a gift of one hundred rupees at Prabhupāda's feet and bowing to him said: "Bābā! We are not good men. Don't worry, though. You remain here with love. As long as we are around, nothing bad will happen to you." After saying this, the gang of thieves, bowing again to Prabhupāda, took their leave.

Prabhupāda at one time used to do private worship in a place called Goālapukur near Kusumasarovara. It was dense forest. One day in the middle of the night Prabhupāda was resting. With him was one servant. At that time two thugs arrived there and asked how much money they had. That day a *bhakta* had come to show respect to Prabhupāda and had given some money. The servant brought out that money and offered it into the hands of the thieves. After that they asked for something to eat. At that time, because Prabhupāda was ill, a kind of sweet balls had been made for Prabhupāda out of ghee and cow's milk. Out of that the servant gave them four sweet balls. They devoured those four and asked for more. Then, when Prabhupāda asked his servant to give them all of the sweets the servant did as asked. The thugs took two sweets and after going off a ways they came back to Prabhupāda, returned the money they had taken and departed.

Without Faults

There are many kinds of faults. Among them there are eighteen major ones. Those are: bewilderment, weariness, confusion, astringent flavor, useless labor, unreality, anger, acquisitiveness, apprehension, universal folly, inequality, strong urges, agitation, arrogance, envy, harm, distress, dependence on others. Prabhupāda was free of all those faults. I will try to throw some light on this topic briefly.

Bewilderment

Prabhupāda was not in the least bewildered by worldly things. Since this is known to everyone, I have not given any special examples.

Weariness

In his life as a practitioner or in his life as accomplished being no one saw Prabhupāda to be overcome with weariness. Only at night an ordinary state of weariness used to remain and that too only for a half an hour.

Useless Labor

Useless labor is labor done to attain worldly things without any focus on Śrī Kṛṣṇa. On this subject, too, much has been discussed before.

Astringent Flavor

This is passion without any connection with divine love (*prema*). For one who has achieved an object that consists of inconceivable divine love, where is his interest in any astringent flavor?

Unreality

What previously was not, now is, and later will not remain, that is the unreal. The only real thing is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. One who with his body, mind, and speech has sought shelter with that real thing, for him what place is there for the unreal?

Anger

Prabhupāda was without anger. Nevertheless, in order to correct his disciples he from time to time showed imitation anger. Clever people will observe this.

Acquisitiveness

This is the desire to obtain the things of this world. In the matter of obtaining worldly things Prabhupāda had no interest. Whatever of Prabhupāda's temples and ashramas there were, he had no interest in them. They arose because of his *bhakta*s' desires.

One *bhakta* revealed a desire to spend lots of money to renovated Prabhupāda's temple at Rādhākuṇḍa. If one said that Prabhupāda showed only a small amount of enthusiasm for it would suffice. Nevertheless the *bhakta* many times submitted his desire to Prabhupāda. In response, Prabhupāda said: "Do as you desire." Prabhupāda did not clearly display any kind of enthusiasm for the project.

Prabhupāda was staying at Nīlācala. At that time one *bhakta* requested of him: "Bābā! Please go to Vṛndāvana. If you don't go to Vṛndāvana, Brajen Dhar will not build a temple at Rādhākuṇḍa." Hearing this, Prabhupāda showing the thumb of his right hand said: "If he doesn't do it, I don't care at all." Take it from that how free from desire he was.

Apprehension

For one who had no desire to obtain worldly things, there was certainly no apprehension about the loss of worldly things.

Universal Folly

This consists of the desire to protect the universe of *bhakta*s like Brahmā and so forth. For one who wants to attain the menial service of Śrī Rādhikā, where is his universal folly?

Inequality

This topic has been previously discussed.

Strong Urges

This is worldly desire which only gives sorrow. On this topic I have not repeated former examples.

Agitation

This is restlessness. One who has attained the direct vision of the Young Couple (*Yugala-kisora*, Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa) has become truly peaceful. Prabhupāda was free of real agitation.

Arrogance

That Prabhupāda was completely free of conceit. This anyone who has had association with him even for the smallest while would accept unanimously. Not only was he free of arrogance himself. If even the slightest amount of arrogance were seen among any of his *bhaktas* he would not tolerate it.

One time a servant said to Prabhupāda: “Bābā! In practices of ritual purity we are not any less than any other community (*sampradāya*). Rather the Gauḍīyas practice greater ritual purity than many other communities. Why then do many other communities not accept food cooked by the hands of Gaudīyas?” Prabhupāda in an extremely serious manner fiercely protested: “This is your arrogance. You should think to yourself that they have much greater practices of purity than you. This kind of arrogance is not good.” The servant became shamed by this kind of statement from Prabhupāda.

A servant was telling Prabhupāda about his misdeeds in his previous stage of life (*āśrama*). After that, the servant said to Prabhupāda: “You know, Bābā. I was previously very bad.” Prabhupāda became very penitive and then said: “You mean you want to say—now you have become good?” The servant was completely unprepared for this kind of question from Prabhupāda. He was able to understand that in that kind of

statement of his—"now I have become good"—there was an arrogance lurking. That arrogance was unable to hide from Prabhupāda's faultless sight. Then the servant said: "No, Bābā! I have not even now become good. Still, before there was no effort to be good. Now I am trying. That is the only difference."

Envy

This is being pained when one sees another's good fortune. This is a very reprehensible mental state. There is no need to mention this in connection with Prabhupāda.

Harm

Harm is not appropriate even in ordinary human beings. What to speak of humans, Prabhupāda did not harm any living being.

One time there were a lot of bugs in the bed that Prabhupāda used to sleep on. His servants said that if they cleaned the bed in the most best manner with hot water, the bugs would all die. Prabhupāda did not accept this suggestion. He said: "If one puts the bed in the sun, then the bugs will all run off."

Because Prabhupāda did not harm any living being, no living being harmed him. Sparrows used to come in bliss and land on his head and then fly off again.

In Prabhupāda's temple at Rādhākuṇḍa there were many mice. Prabhupāda did not scare off even one mouse. Many times I saw that the mice being chased would run into Prabhupāda's outer garments and take shelter there. It was as if they had a long friendship with him.

Distress

Prabhupāda did not have even the least attachment to worldly things. Therefore, when worldly things were destroyed he felt no distress.

Dependence on Others

In the first stage of practice Prabhupāda used to perform all activities from cooking on with his own hand. He was not dependent on anyone at any time. At a later time when he was overcome with paralysis, even though it is the root of obligations he used to accept service. But, in his mind and in his heart he did not depend on anyone.

At least eighteen kinds of fault have been considered here.

I noticed that if anyone talked about anyone else's faults in the presence of Prabhupāda, he would become extremely irritated with the person talking. That was so whether he spoke justly or unjustly. Prabupāda usually used to say that of all the kinds of character faults there were, the worst was that of finding faults in others. No one ever heard any discussion of the faults of anyone from Prabhupāda's lips. Because he was himself without fault he saw no faults in others.

Generosity

He was extraordinarily charitable. What can one say about his charity? No matter who it was, *brāhmaṇa*, *Vrajavāsī*, *bābājī*, or whoever it may be, if they came to Prabhupāda with some need, he would without agitation give to them. *Bhaktas* used to give clothes and other materials for his service and he without a hesitation would distribute them among the *brāhmaṇas*, *Vrajavādīs* and holy men.

One descendent of a Gosvāmī used to come to see him from time to time. As soon as he arrived he used to talk about the troubles of his household life. Then whatever was in Prabhupāda's possession, money, clothes, and so forth he would give to him without hesitation. I have seen this kind of generosity in him in many ways.

Softheartedness

He was by nature tender and soft. What other example will I give about Prabhupāda's tender nature. Those who have come into contact with Prabhupāda know it in the best way.

One time Prabhupāda was staying at Kokilāvana. He had come from Premasarovara to Kokilāvana. A few days after that a severe hail storm

destroyed the crops of nearly all the places of the region of Vraja. Praqbhupāda began to say again and again with extreme sadness: "Just see what kind of holy man I am! They have served us with so much effort and look at the result of serving a holy man like me. All their crops have been destroyed." Saying this again and again he began to show sadness.

It is particularly worthy of note that at that time only the place where Prabhupāda was staying did not have any sort of hail storm.

Purity

Purity is of two kinds: inner purity and outer purity. Prabhupāda with great firmness protected this state of purity. Outer purity he used to observe indeed and with that inner purity. For example, if such things as calumniating anyone, harming any one, being pain at another's good fortune, lust, anger, greed and so forth appear, then one's inner purity is destroyed. Prabhupāda with extreme effort and enthusiasm protected his inner purity.

Being Without Possessions

One is possessionless who has rejected all forms of enjoyment and pleasure for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Prabhupāda left behind wife, son, family, all the earthly joys for the sake of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Offering Help To All

Prabhupāda by see all as the same used to help everyone without distinction. To him, when it came to helping there was such thing as no self and other.

At one time Prabhupāda was living at Tapovana. Needless to say, wherever Prabhupāda used to stay, there charity cases also appeared. Even in Tapovana there was no exception. There was a *Vrajavāsi brāhmaṇa* who had received Prabhupāda's grace. When he became the charity case, he used to come with his whole family and have grace-food. Not only that—his daughter's marriage was coming, please give cloth. His dhoti had become torn; please give a dhoti. In the winter I feel such

difficulty; please give me a blanket. In this way, whenever there was whatever need, he would ask it from Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda without argument whenever and whatever he asked for used to give it to him. One day one of Prabhupāda's servants said: "Baba! If you invite him, he will come along with ten or twelve people. Apart from that when he wants some cloth or something you give it to him. He is your disciple. Therefore, he should serve you. But not that, you are serving him." Hearing this kind of statement from his servant, Prabhupāda said is a very gentle way: "Look. For one who is hungry, food is necessary. For one who has no cloth, cloth is necessary. His needs are greater. He is a *brāhmaṇa* and on top of that a Vrajavāsī. If one has to give giving to him is proper. They are not able to eat well. If it doesn't happen here the game will be over for him and his family in a few days." Seeing this kind of magnanimous outlook of Prabhupāda's the servant began to condemn his own niggardly attitudes.

Peacefulness

A *bhakta* of Kṛṣṇa is desireless and therefore peaceful. All those who desire sense enjoyment, liberation, and power are without peace. In Prabhupāda's case what more exemplification shall I give?

Without Lust

This means being without the deep-seated inclinations or urges (*vāsanā*) to satisfy one's own senses. Prabhupāda used to always remain immersed in the flavor of divine sport. Therefore, it goes without saying that in him there was not the slightest degree of inclination to satisfy his own senses.

Indifference

This means being without effort in any other matter except for serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This too took concrete shape in the life of Prabhupāda.

Steadiness

One never used see any agitation in Prabhupāda on any matter. Once one of Prabhupāda's disciples was shoved by the monkey and fell off a roof. Having fallen down that servant was badly injured and had lost consciousness. The news was given to Prabhupāda. Hearing this news he was not in the least upset. He only said: "For this reason my left eye has been twitching since morning. I knew that there would be some loss." After saying this he began to talk normally with another *bhakta* on another subject.

One of Prabhupāda's disciples, a bābājī by the name of Śaṅkarāraṇya Dāsa, without telling anyone entered Nidhuvana at night desiring to see the divine sport. The next day in the morning the guard opened the main door for entering the forest and found the bābājī unconscious on the path entering the forest. When they received the news the guru-brothers came running. A doctor was brought. Foam was coming out of the bābājī's mouth. After much examination and consultation the doctors could not find any cause for this. After remaining a day in this state the bābājī was taken unconscious to Prabhupāda's āśrama in Govardhana. Prabhupāda was then engaged in private worship at the slope of Girirāja. News was sent to Prabhupāda and the amazing thing was that he did not show the slightest degree of disturbance. After that some of Prabhupāda's foot wash was brought and placed in the mouth of Śaṅkarāraṇya Dāsa Bābājī and a few moments after that he left his mortal body and went on to the next world. News of Śaṅkarāraṇya's passing was sent to Prabhupāda, but another astounding matter. At this too Prabhupāda did not show even a little unsteadiness. He only said: "If he had gone in a condition of a little more mature worship, it would have been better."

Conquered the Six Bad Traits

The six bad traits are: lust, anger, greed, illusion, intoxication, and envy. By another account they are: hunger, thirst, old age, disease, grief, and delusion. Prabhupāda was one who conquered those six bad qualities as well. Since the first set of bad traits are among the previous the eighteen faults, the following six bad qualities are discussed here.

Hunger and Thirst

In Prabhupāda's behavior, I have never seen him to be troubled by thirst or hunger. On Ekādaśī and on other waterless fasts especially on a summer days, we used to become extremely troubled, but we never saw Prabhupāda to be troubled.

Old Age and Disease

Prabhupāda's old age and disease that were seen, those were only to give others a good opportunity to perform service and thus to bring about their ultimate well-being. The old age and disease in him that were seen in him were not produced by his past actions starting to fructify. Below I have tried to clarify the matter.

One day Prabhupāda said to one of his intimate servants: "Look, for saints (*mahāpuruṣa*) nothing remains to be called fructifying karma. But, in order to give others an opportunity to perform service and to bring about their ultimate good fortune, they ask the Lord for him to create new fructifying karma for them." After saying this Prabhupāda went to do his ablutions. When he returned from his bath, the same servant began to dry off his feet. At that time Prabhupāda said with a smile: "O Lord! Please create some karma and again cause some more service. This is your sport." By this statement of Prabhupāda it is proven that for him there was no more fructifying karma. Nevertheless, to make others fulfilled by giving them an opportunity to serve he had created fructifying karma.

I have noticed that if anyone came to visit him, Prabhupāda would talk about the sufferings of his body. But, when no one was there, I have noticed that he did not think that there was any kind of suffering. With an affectionate, peaceful and satisfied face he would continue relishing the flavors of divine sport. In order to hide himself from the view of the people he would show this kind of external illness. The truth of this was proved at many times and in many ways. How many times was his blood tested, his stool, his urine and so forth and how many times were xrays taken, but in all of that not the slightest problem was ever found.

His sport of illness did not remain the same either. After a few days his illness used to change. Sometimes it was "My stomach is aching. Bring a doctor." The doctor was brought and the medicine began to be

taken. Now it was "My teeth are aching. Bring the doctor." The doctor was brought. The teeth were done; now it was difficulty breathing: "Bring the doctor." The difficulty of breathing was forgotten. Now a cough started. When one illness started the other was forgotten. In this way he reveal an illness-sport and kept his servant-*bhaktas* busy.

Grief and Delusion

This topic has been discussed before.

Moderation in Eating

Prabhupāda was always a moderate eater. In the first stages of his practice he used to eat only fruit during the day and then only a little of that. Later he would eat a little milk and tapioca in the morning and in the afternoon water-chestnut flat-breads and vegetables without oil or spice. In his final days he only ate curds and boiled apple once a day.

Without Frenzy

I never saw Prabhupāda become frantic or maddened by any matter. Let any delightful or disturbing incident occur, he was in all circumstances free of madness or frenzy.

Humility

One who thinks of himself as lower than anyone else and does not desire to be respected or honored by anyone else is humble.

This feeling of humility existed in full measure in Prabhupāda. If any Vaiṣṇava came to see him, he would bow down and in a very modest way would say: "I am unfit. I cannot go anywhere. Therefore, you have gracefully come to give me a sight of you and make me fulfilled." Whatever holy man on whatever their stage, when he came Prabhupāda would show respect for him through this sort of humble statement. It was not only that he was free of arrogance, if he noticed even the slightest arrogance in any disciple-servant he would severely condemn it.

One day one of Prabhupāda's servants had an argument with one of his older guru-brothers. At that Prabhupāda called that younger servant and said: "Look, you should not regard the judgment of an older guru-brother as unjust. You should think that the fault is yours. If you ever see someone's faults, you should think that it is because of your ignorance and arrogance that you are seeing others faults. Even if your elder brother strikes you you should think that the fault is yours. Keep in mind that if one is able to tolerate one is chaste and if one is not able to tolerate one is a whore. If you are able to be tolerant, you will be able to be a holy person (*sādhu*). And if you are not able to be tolerant you will become fallen. If you are not able to be free of pride you will not be able to obtain *bhakti* at any time. As long as you feel proud, you will not be able to receive Bhaktidevī's grace. Another name for Bhaktidevī is the Mother of Humility. If a small child is at home then one should know that the mother is nearby. She doesn't go very far away. In that same way, one should know that where there is humility, Bhaktidevī is staying nearby. The tree that bears fruit bows down. In the same way, the head of one who has received even a little of the grace of Bhaktidevī remains bowed. In other words, he continues to think of himself as lower than others. "The Lord shows greater grace to the lowly. One who thinks of himself as a scholar and high-born is very arrogant." If one is able to think of oneself as lower than all others, there is no more fear. You should not go to defeat anyone. This is the Vaiṣṇava world. Here the one who defeats is the one who loses. We have all lost and come here. We are constantly remain losing. You too should lose. You will see then that you have won." Prabhupāda always gave special force to the "lower than a blade of grass" verse.¹²

Taciturn

In Prabhupāda inscrutability was particularly noticeable. Knowing his inner moods was difficult.

Compassionate

One who is not able to tolerate the sufferings of others is compassionate. This subject has been discussed before.

¹²Third verse of the *Siksāṣṭaka* attributed to Śrī Caitanya..

Friendly

I also have left aside this topic because of repetition.

Poetic

One who is good at creating sentences that are sweet to the ear, possess beautiful meanings, and arrangements of deep feelings is poetic. This subject has been discussed in the treatment of the life of Prabhupāda.

Expert

One who is capable of getting things done is expert. Expert also is one who is not lazy and who is able to complete difficult tasks quickly. Before he was affected by paralysis, he was expert in all undertakings.

Silent

One who does not speak about anything other than the names, forms, qualities and sports of the Lord is called silent. In the first stage of his practice Prabhupāda used to maintain complete silence. At later times during the day he remained silent and in the evening he would speak as needed.

An Actual True Guru

Prabhupāda was an actual authentic guru. I am not making this kind of statement just because he was my guru. Through the few incidents given below, I will try to make this matter more clear.

One time a lawyer from Kolkata took initiation from Prabhupāda. His line of thinking was that if he took initiation from an accomplished saint, by the grace of his guru all obstacles and calamities would be removed and his special earnings in business and trade would be improved. But, not seeing that kind of result after taking initiation he became disappointed. Gradually he began to lose his faith in his guru also. Then one

of his so-called friends instructed him: "Brother, all that worship of the divine couple is worthless. Nothing will come of that. You take to the mantra of the Goddess. The Mother is very much awake. Therefore, because of that your good fortune and earnings in business will increase." The lawyer believed his friends words to be true and was initiated again into the Goddess mantra by a worshiper of the Goddess. Immediately after receiving that initiation every kind of obstacle, calamity, disrespect, disease and sadness arose such that the lawyer became completely lost and began to search for some solution. One after another the troubles came. Then seeing no other recourse he took shelter of a *brāhmaṇa* priest at Kālī Ghāṭa. He told him: "Brother, please implore the Mother on my behalf. I am worshiping the Mother; yet in spite of that why are there so many difficulties? And how can I become free of those troubles? Inform the Mother about my troubles. I will cover all of your expenses." The priest did that. A few days after the imploring of the Mother, the Mother one night took an extremely frightening form in the priest's dream and said: "Why are you beseeching me on behalf of that one? I am going to finish him off. He hasn't seen anything yet. I have only just begun with him. Didn't he reject an accomplished Vaiṣṇava guru and take shelter with me?" Saying this much the image of the Mother disappeared. The priest became extremely frightened. He went to that lawyer and told him what had happened. Hearing all that, the lawyer went all the way to Vṛndāvana and fell at Prabhupāda's feet crying like a baby.

There was a wealthy resident of West Bengal who out of a desire to receive mantra initiation was searching for an authentic guru. Many people from many different communities began to exert influence to try to bring him into their fold. That person having no other recourse went to Tārakeśvara and supplicated Bābā Tārakanātha to obtain a genuine guru. A few days after the supplication Bābā Tārakanātha told him in a dream: "You receive initiation from the Mitras' family guru." There was one Mitra with whom the gentleman was well acquainted and who was a disciple of Prabhupāda. After that he went to Prabhupāda and told the story of the dream and receiving the grace of Prabhupāda he became fortunate.

Guileless Behavior like a Child

Prabhupāda from time to time behaved like a child. When he saw small children he used to become very joyful. Seating them close to him

he would tell stories.

One of Prabhupāda's bābājī disciples while talking with Prabhupāda used to tell him stories based on incidents from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and sometimes incidents from the *Mahābhārata*. Sometimes in the course of describing various incidents he would tell stories about Gopāla Bhāḍa as well. When he was describing some particular incident Prabhupāda would become amazing just like a child and say: "Bāhbā! How terrifying! What happened after that, Gaura Govinda?" After this kind of listening he used to say: "You know a whole lot. I don't know anything at all!"

One day a big black ant bit into Prabhupāda's foot and held on. After many efforts to remove the ant, the ant became torn in half at the belly. Then that same bābājī, thinking of a riddle, recited it: "Black in color, feeds on the toe; though its stomach is torn it does not die."¹³ Prabhupāda hearing the riddle became enthusiastic just like a child to know what the subject was. When the bābājī told him the meaning of the riddle, Prabhupāda began to laugh just like a child.

A *bhakta* often used to come from Vṛndāvana to see Prabhupāda. He used to wear on his head Gāndhī hat. Prabhupāda suddenly had a desire to use one of those kinds of hats. He requested that *bhakta* to have such a hat made for him. In a short while a cloth hat arrived for Prabhupāda. Receiving that hat Prabhupāda's joy could not be restrained. He used to sit nearly all the time with that hat on his head. When he took the hat off his head he would ask again and again if the hat was carefully put away. One would think that that hat was his everything. After wearing that hat for a few days he forgot about that hat.

Free of Modern Ways of Thinking

One day a servant was talking about his occupation in his former life. After that he said to Prabhupāda "Do you know, Bābā, in my work life I used to also take bribes (*ghuṣa*)."¹³ Prabhupāda said: "What sort of thing is a *ghuṣa* (bribe)?" Though the servant tried in many ways he was not able to make Prabhupāda understand what a bribe was.

¹³*kālo varan, chakhāna caran, pet chirleo nāika maran.*

One day a servant was talking with Prabhupāda about the modern or present age and mentioned as examples the cruel massacres at the villages of Pipadā in Bihar and Māndā Bazar in Tripurā. Prabhupāda said with great astonishment: "What's that? Do such things really happen in the present day?"

Vigilant Observation Even Though Unmanifest

At Premasarvara a Vrajavāsī was a disciple of Prabhupāda. He was advanced in age, too. A few days after Prabhupāda's disappearance, after being bedridden with illness he said one day: "Look! Guru Bābā has come to take me. Give him a place to sit." After saying that his body became motionless. Prabhupāda himself came to taken him to the far shore of the mortal world.

When one of the other guru-brothers developed ill feelings towards a servant at the Govardhana temple, he decided that he would go elsewhere. That night Prabhupāda said to that servant in a dream: "Sudāmā, where have you decided to go?" The servant, Sudāmā Dāsajī, never went anywhere again.

In Vṛndāvana at Śrī Śrī Rādhāmūrārimohana Kuñja when there was some disturbance on some matter, the servant determined that he was going to go elsewhere. At night in a dream he saw Bābā who said with an extremely saddened face: "No one will serve me. No one will serve me." That servant never went anywhere else.

One day Prabhupāda's wife Mātā Gosvāminī came to Prabhupāda's āśrama in Govardhana. When she came revealed her desire to stay in Prabhupāda's private worship hut at the temple. At night Prabhupāda said to Sudāmā Dāsa in a dream: "Put her out of my room immediately! Otherwise, I will not be able to go into it."

On Kauśīka Mountain in the Himālayas a Daśanāmī Sannyāsī holy man used to perform private worship. At the order of his guru there he came to Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana wishing to worship the divine couple. After coming to Vṛndāvana he became specially enthusiastic to associate with Vaiṣṇavas of the Caitanyite tradition. But as he went for association, in some places he encountered special attacks. Because, since he was a *māyāvādin sannyāsin*, many nourished a disgust toward him and used to give him fierce glances. In many places they disrespected

him as well. At this he experienced great pain in his heart. Coming to Vṛndāvana he saw a picture of Prabhupāda and became specially faithful towards him. One day at night he had a dream. Prabhupāda was sitting at the base of a tree on the bank of Premasarovara. The renunciant prostrated himself before him. Prabhupāda with great enthusiasm offered him a seat. After that the renunciant expressed his mental anguish before Prabhupāda: "Master! Why is there so much constriction in *dharma*? Being a *sannyāsin* one is not qualified to attain the lotus feet of the divine couple? Members of other communities are not able to attain the lotus feet of Bhagavān, or become *bhaktas* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu? Or is this the monopoly of Gaudīyas? I came to Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana with so many hopes, but now I see that here nearly everyone is happy to remain bound within the limits of restrictions. Going to associate with Vaiṣṇavas I have gained only mental anguish and my mind has become saddened." In response to that Prabhupāda said with a smiling, peaceful face: "Look! If one ignites wood that is wet one gets smoke and a sputtering, crackling noise. When that wood has been burned by the fire and turned into ashes then there is no more smoke and no more noise. In the same way as long as the mental operations are covered with ignorance there are many kinds of disagreements and clashes. When those mental operations are burned by the fire of knowledge then there are no more disagreements. Where there is no perception of the consciousness world (*cinmaya-jagat*), there are many communal disagreements. Where there is investigation of consciousness [realm] illuminated by the light of *bhakti*, there is peace." The renunciant being pleased by this answer of Prabhupāda accepted him as his guru.

Although Prabhupāda has become unmanifest, he is still present among us through his vigilant observation. Fortunate practitioners experience this.

Jaya Śrī Gaurasundara, Jaya Nityānanda Rāma!

Part II

Prabhupāda's Sūcaka Kīrtanas

Kīrtana One (Binod Bihari Das Bābājī)

শ্রীশ্রীতিনকড়ি বাবার
সূচক কীর্তন

A Song Introducing Śrī Śrī Tinkadi Bābā

A *sūcaka kīrtana* is a special kind of song of praise that introduces or indicates the greatness of the traits or qualities of a saint. It is usually composed by one of the disciples of that saint and sung on special occasions when the saint is remembered. This song is one of two written for Śrī Tinkadi Bābā. This one is by his disciple Binoda Bihari Dāsa Bābā and is printed at the back of his Bengali book on the life Śrī Tinkadi Bābā. Another *sūcaka kīrtana* was written for Bābā by Śrī Hṛdayānanda Dāsa Bābā who, though not a disciple of Tinkadi Bābā, was a special object of his affection. It is printed for the first time and translated in the next chapter.

জয় নিত্যানন্দ রাম
 পরমারাধ্যতম শ্রীগুরুদেবের
 গুণলেশ সূচক কীর্তন

জয় রে জয় রে জয়, শ্রীগুরু করণাময়,
 প্রভু মোর তিনকড়ি গোস্বামী মহাশয়।
 ভক্তি ধর্ম আচরিয়া, জগভরি প্রচারিয়া,
 পতিত উক্তারিল যিঁহো অমায়ায়।।

মেদিনীপুর ঘাটাল মাঝে, এক পুণ্যভূমি আছে,
 নাম যার মনোহরপুর।
 প্রভু গুণনিধি মোর, শাখা হয়ে নিত্যানন্দের,
 বসতি করেন সেই পুর।।

পিতা হরিমোহন গোস্বামী, সর্বগুণে গুণমণি,
 যাঁকো পুরে ‘ঠাকুর’ বলে গায়।
 মাতা দেবী সুরধনী, যেন পতিত পাবনী,
 যাঁর গর্ভে আইলা মহাশয়।।

তের শত তের সনে, শুভ মাঘী পূর্ণিমা দিনে,
 অবতীর্ণ হৈলা অবনীতে।
 সর্ব সুলক্ষণ দেখি, সবার জুড়ায় আঁথি,
 উঠিল মঙ্গল ধ্বনি আচরিতে।।

Victory to Nityānanda Rāma!
 A song of praise introducing
 a few of the good qualities
 of the most worshipable *śrī gurudeva*.

Victory! O Victory! O Victory!
 To the compassionate *guru*,
 My magnanimous master,
 Tinkādi Gosvāmī.

Practicing the religion of *bhakti*
 And spreading it filled the world,
 He uplifted the fallen so guilelessly.

In the district of Medinīpura,
 There is an auspicious land
 Whose name is Manoharapura.

My master, a treasure chest of virtues,
 In the branch of Nityānanda
 Resides in that town.

His father was Gosvāmī Harimohana,
 A virtuous gem among all virtues;
 As “Thākura” in the village he was sung.

His mother was Suradhanī,
 A purifier of the fallen;
 To her womb the great one came.

In the year thirteen hundred and thirteen,
 On the fortunate fullmoon day of Māgha,¹⁴
 He descended to the earth.

Seeing all the good signs,
 Everyone’s eyes were pleased.
 There arose suddenly a joyful sound.

¹⁴The month in which the full moon occurs in the constellation of Magha which corresponds to January–February in the English calendar.

বাড়ে প্রভু মাতৃকোরে, পরম আনন্দ ভরে,
নাম হৈল কিশোরী কিশোরানন্দ।

পথও বর্ষ বয়ঃকালে, জননী বিদায় নিলে,
পিতার হইল বড় দ্বন্দ্ব।।

পিতা অতি সদাশয়, ইষ্টে গাঢ় নিষ্ঠা হয়,
সমর্পয়ে কিশোরি চরণে।

হেনকালে এক আঘীয়া, সাগ্রহে আসিয়া,
ভার নিল সেবার কারণে।।

তিনটি কড়ি বিনিময়ে, আইসেন প্রভু ক্রীত হয়ে,
নাম হইল প্রভু তিনকড়ি।

ধাইমার নয়নমণি, মোর প্রভু গুণমণি,
পালিলেন অতি যত্ন করি।।

বাল্য চাপল্য মতি, পাঠাভ্যাসে নাহি রাতি,
বিদ্যালয়ে প্রবেশয়ে যেই।

কপট ক্রন্দন করে, ধাইমার থাকি কোরে,
পাঠশালার নাম শুনিলেই।।

নবম বর্ষ যবে, উপনযন হইল তবে,
ভাবান্তর হইল প্রভুর।

গাঢ় অনুরাগ ভরে, গীতা গ্রন্থ বুকে ধরে,
যুরয়ে ফিরয়ে নিরস্তর।।

পিতা ঠাঁই দীক্ষাতে, বাড়ে অনুরাগ চিতে।
থাকি মাতি কীর্তন বিলাসে।

পিতার সহিত শেষে, ফিরেন পহঁ দেশে দেশে,
পরানন্দে সততই ভাসে।।

The master grew on the lap of his mother,
In the fullness of the highest joy,
His name became Kiśorīkiśorānanda.

When his age was only five
And his mother bid him farewell.
His father then faced a major dilemma.

His father was very noble-hearted.
He had deep in his beloved deity.
He offered prayers at the feet of Kiśori.¹⁵

At that time a relative lady
With enthusiasm came forth
And took responsibility for the sake of service.

In exchange for three chowries,
The Master was purchased.
Thus, his name became Tinkadi.

He was the jewel of his nurse's eye,
My Master, gem of virtues.
She raised him with great care.

His childhood mind was fickle.
He had no love for studies,
When he entered the local school.

He cried false tears
And clung to his nurse's lap
Whenever he even heard the word "school."

When he was nine years old
His *brāhmaṇa* initiation took place.
And Master's feelings completely changed.

Filled with deep attachment,
He took the *Gītā* to his heart.
And wandered out, around, and back ceaselessly.

When he received initiation from his father,
His deep attachment increased in his heart.
His mind remained in the joy of *kārtana*.

With his father finally
Master toured from place to place,
Always floating in the highest bliss.

¹⁵Śrī Rādhikā.

শান্ত সৌম্য ক্ষমাবান, সান্ধ্রাং যেন মুর্তিমান,
 দৈন্যাদি গুণের হয় থনি।
 স্বজাতীয় আশয় সঙ্গে, লীলা রস পর সঙ্গে,
 উন্নাসে ভরিত মুখথানি॥

অতি শিশুকাল হৈতে, কৃষ্ণ অনুরাগ চিতে,
 পরম বৈরাগ্য সদা মন।
 পথওদশ বর্ষ পরে, একদিব্য বালিকা হেরে,
 পিতৃদেব কৈলেন চিন্তন॥

মনোহরপুর নিকট গ্রাম, খাঞ্জাপুর সুখ ধাম,
 গোপীনাথ গোঁসান্ত্রির বসতি তথায়।
 সপ্তম বর্ষীয়া কন্যা, রূপে গুণে অসামান্যা,
 তোমার করেতে সমর্পয়॥

শীতলা সুন্দরী সতী, সহধমিণী ভক্তিমতি,
 আনুকূল্যে করয়ে সেবন।
 সদাচার পরায়ণা, নিষ্ঠারূচি নাই তুলনা,
 পরানন্দে হইলা মগন॥

বিষয়ে বিপত্তি জান, সংসার স্বপন মান,
 নরতনু ভজনের মূল।
 ঠাকুর নরোত্তমের বাক্য হৃদে করি মহাশক্ত
 সদা হইয়া ব্যাকুল॥

এই মতে কত দিনে পিতৃদেবের অদর্শনে
 ভজন বৈরাগ্য বাঢ়য়।
 পতিত পাষণ্ড যত, প্রেমে হয় উন্মত্ত,
 স্মরণ লইল রাঙ্গাপায়॥

"Peaceful, calm, and tolerant,
 As though their very image,
 A mine of the virtues of humility and such.
 In the company of those with similar desires,
 In the company of those who relish divine sport,
 His face was filled with joy."

From a very young age
 Feeling for Kṛṣṇa was in his heart,
 The highest apathy¹⁶ always in his mind.

After the age of fifteen,
 His father began to worry
 searching for a saintly girl.

A village was near Manoharapura
 Named Khāñjāpura, a happy place.
 There lived Gopīnātha Gosāñi.

"Your daughter whose age is seven,
 In beauty and virtue without match,
 Into our hands deliver."

ŚītalāSundarī, the chaste,
 His sharer in *dharma*, her mind filled with *bhakti*,
 Performed his service very favorably.

Intent was she on pure behavior,
 Her firmness and taste beyond compare.
 In the highest joy she was immersed.

"Know that in the sense objects there's trouble;
 Accept worldly life as a dream.
 The human body is the root of worship."

The words of Narottama Ṭhākura
 He made most powerful in his heart,
 Always remaining impatient.

In this way after so many days
 When his father passed away,
 His worship and renunciation increased.

All the fallen godless
 Become intoxicated by divine love,
 And take shelter at those reddened feet.

¹⁶towards the world

Appendix A

Introduction to the Author

Binode Bihari Das Bābājī was born in Barisal, Bangladesh. He was born in the year of 1947. In 1950 he and his parents, losing all their property and in poverty, went to West Bengal and settled in the district of 24 Parganas. Both his parents passed away when he was still quite young. His father passed away first when he was eight years old and then two years later his mother passed away.¹

Binode studied in school only up to the fifth class of primary school. He left school and joined a troupe of dancers and singers. He learned singing and dance from them as he traveled with them, suffering sometimes from much exposure and hunger. At the age of eighteen he found work with the government, studied with a private tutor and passed the tenth class level. Eventually he got a departmental promotion to supervisor and lived a solitary life, still continuing with his study of music which included the study of tabla, harmonium, and sitar. As a result he became a certified radio artist as well.

Binode lived the modern life in Kolkatta and did not consider a spiritual life until 1974 when, at the age of twenty-seven, a neighboring lady gave him a book on the life and teachings of Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa Dev.

While reading this book, Binode realized that his life was not being fulfilled. Seeing modern social life to be a lie, he thought to himself that

¹This account was given to Jagadish Das by Binode Bihari Das Bābājī during Jagadish's stay at Radhakund during the months of October-January in 2006-7.

peaceful, spiritual life needed to be developed and lived. How to do this—what should he do?

After spending only one day like this Binode decided he needed to change his life. He thereupon transferred and moved to another place (Konagar) to live alone and reflect. He changed his eating habits, eating only pure foods, practiced silence and other things to improve his spiritual life. He went often to a local library and borrowed books on spiritual life; anything that might give him some knowledge about spiritual life and how to lead such a life he read at this time. This went on for the next five years, until he realized that the guru was important, along with association with the holy (*sādhu-saṅga*) and the holy name (*harināma*). Then for another five years he traveled around to many holy places in search of a guru.

Feeling unsatisfied and very sad to have not yet found a genuine guru, one night Binode dreamed that he had to go to Giri Govardhana [Mount Govardhana in the District of Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh]. He had never heard of this holy place before and so after asking around he found out that it was near Vrindaban.

Binode went to Giri Govardhan and came upon Kiśorīkiśorānanda Bābā's ashram and was impressed with it—but no one was there at the time. He returned home. He came back at a later time, went to nearby Radhakund and inquired of a local *sādhu*. He was told that an accomplished person (*siddha-puruṣa*) was there at Rāsh Bari. Binode met Bābā then. Bābā was very kind to him and Binode was very impressed. For a time Binode went back and forth from home to visit Baba. Then in 1980 he while doing the eighty-four square mile circumambulation (*parikramā*) of Vraja he saw Bābā—who told him to come back and see him after the holy circumambulation was over.

When Binode went to see Bābā as was requested of him, Bābā asked him to put on the neck beads and to take holy name initiation, but he refused. Bābā insisted and told him that he would give it to him tomorrow. Baba then instructed Vanamali Das Bābā to prepare him, and so forth. So he received holy name and then thought to himself now that I have a true guru why should I go home? Why should I leave?

Feeling troubled about leaving, Binode went to Bābā as if swept up by some force and with tears in his eyes. He prayed to Bābā to let him stay there with him and not leave: "I don't want to go back to work". Bābā became very happy and laughing out loud said: "Very good! Very good! Then stay." Binode never went back home again.

From that time on Binode lived with Bābā and the group of *sādhus* that lived with Bābā also. Binode became one of Bābā's personal servants and traveled with Bābā and his group to many of the holy places of Vraja, Puri, and Navadvīpa. It was in Navadvīpa in 1984 that his blessed gurudev entered into the eternal life with Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*nitya-lilā-praveśa*).

Before Śrī Gurudev passed away he asked Binode to go to Chandari in Vraja to do private worship (*bhajan*). Feeling very lonely after this Binode was unable to decide where to live, where to settle down for private worship. After visiting many ashrams and temples and staying for a few days in each he understood that those places filled with so much activity and conflict were not good for him to settle in for private worship. He felt mentally disturbed in those places.

Binode understood he should live alone in a secluded place if he wanted to progress in worship, but since he had never lived completely alone in his entire life he was worried about whether or not he could do it. Thinking like this he cried many times unsure of where to go. Traveling about in this way, one day he arrived in Barsana. A *sādhu* there gave him a hut for private worship. He lived there for four years doing private worship under difficult conditions, living an austere life of poverty. There it was that he collected information on the life of his blessed gurudev and wrote this book.

At this time a *sādhu* settled nearby who constantly disturbed Binode. Thus, he decided it was time to leave. He went to a nearby forest area called Premasarovar [Lake of Love] and settled into a hut there that was empty. There he stayed for the next eight years. Then, many people, having heard of his reputation, started coming to that area inquiring about him.

As a result Binode went to Chandrasarovar [Lake of the Moon] near Govardhan and other places to practice private worship. Finally, he came to the small village of Lekhi and settled down there for nine years. After that he returned to Barsana, because a devotee had purchased land and built a large hut for him to live undisturbed in the execution of his private worship. This is where he still lives at present. He uses this place as a base and continues to travel about India as a *sādhu mahātmā* (great-souled holy man).

His Other Book

Binode Bihari Das Bābājī has written one other book in Bengali: *Obstacles to the Gradual Unfolding of Bhakti* (*Bhakti-krama-vikāśer Antarāya*). It is a guide for practitioners on the path of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism. As the name implies it is directed at helping practitioners overcome the common obstacles and pitfalls on the path of the cultivation of divine love or *kṛṣṇa-prema*. It is written in the form of a dialogue between a disciple and his guru. Currently, it is being translated into English by Madhumati Dasi under the name *Road-blocks in Bhakti*. Parts of the rough draft of the translation can be found at www.freewebs.com/babajimaharaj/.

Appendix B

My Recollections — Joseph Knapp

[I want to have a really nice photo of Baba starting this appendix!]

Śrī Gurudev!

In writing this tribute I will try to present many of the things I remember about the extremely transcendent, extra-ordinary nature and yet complete human-ness of a truly loving, compassionate, illuminated and transmuted holy man who lived simultaneously in two separate worlds—the internal spiritual world and the external spiritual world! As one can see it is quite hard to stop writing about his wonderful qualities once one begins. But, I cannot stop. And why is that you may ask? The reason is that this being, this holy man—Śrī Śrī 1008 Kiśorīkiśorānanda Bābā Tinkudi Gosvāmī was siddha—completely perfected in the realization of the rasik tradition, a truly inconceivable state of attainment and being! And apart from that he is my dearmost Bābā (spiritual father).

Dear reader, kindly excuse me, for in my writing of my blessed *gurudev*, I will be writing to some extent about myself. Still, the important parts of this reminiscence are about him—the blessed *gurudev*—since he has showered his compassionate grace upon all those connected to him.

I was living in the mountains north of Santa Cruz in the fourth month of a vow of silence and several years into the daily practice of hours of spiritual exercises (*sādhana*), under the guidance of a great, realized Vaiṣṇav Aṣṭāṅga Yogī who live only a few miles up the road from the yogic household in which I lived. Being also influenced by Śrī Rāmkṛṣṇa Paramahāṁsa and Ānandamayī Mā (both famous Bengali saints), I was mixing my *sādhana* with their influences and thinking sadly how unfortunate it was that there was no one on the planet doing what I was doing. Then by chance I heard about an American who had recently moved into town and was giving classes on the Hindu classic, the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

I went to listen to his lectures and to meet this young man. I was then 17-18 years old. We met and as he talked about his tradition and his blessed *gurudev*, I was enthralled and came to realize that I had found my tradition—remember—the one I thought didn’t exist! Over the next few months (and more) we became exquisite friends. He gave me hours and hours of his time translating sacred texts from this wonderful tradition, teaching me the proper etiquette so that I could live with his *gurudev* and the group of *bābājīs* that surrounded him.

He also gave me Bengali self-study books and I began to teach myself the Bengali language. He gave me his *gurudev*’s photograph, as well as the pictures of two other great *siddhas* (perfected ones) of the tradition, which I took home and worshipped. As the days passed and turned into weeks and months, I was delighted, fulfilled and illuminated. I will explain this a little more—I spent the afternoons and evenings with my new friend, Jagadānanda dās (Bābā’s first *dīkṣā*-receiving western disciple), absorbing what I could of the teachings, practices, loving-compassion, and endearing worship ceremonies. After which I would go home to sleep. As I lay there waiting for sleep with my eyes closed I would swear that someone was shining a powerful flash-light on the area of my forehead associated with the third eye. Several times each night, I would experience the same thing. When I opened my eyes I found no one there and certainly no flash-light.

After spending that time with Jagadānanda dāsji, I went off to get a job to raise money for a trip to India so that I could live with his *guru*. I wanted his *guru* to become my blessed *guru*!

When I arrived in India, at the holy place where Bābā lived, I inquired about his whereabouts. The next morning I was guided to an *ashram* in the small town where Bābā was staying at the time [Bābā was known to stay at one place for only one to three months at a time and

then move to another place for private worship (*bhajan*]). I saw him just as I came in from the street and looked across a small field to where he was standing. I couldn't believe my eyes—he looked like an ancient *r̄si* of a time centuries past. I was brought before him and introduced by a letter Jagadānanda had written on my behalf. I cannot rightly describe this being—the very form of illuminated, compassionate, divine love.

I was accepted immediately by Bābā into his company with love and by the group of *sādhus* who surrounded him. I sincerely offer my deepest, heart-felt thanks to Jagadānanda dāsji for his help in instructing me in proper etiquette when living with such holy men. Otherwise, I would have caused much anguish among them. I also thank him for the precious time he spent with me translating the many holy writings of our tradition so that I might swim in their ambrosial meanings.

The typical day for us with Bābā was to wake up at 3:30 am, (although he and one advanced bābājī, a very dear older guru brother named Vanamālī Dās Bābājī) would rise by 2:00 am). After taking care of ones's bathroom needs and then bathing in a nearby holy river or *kunda* (water tank or pond) we would put holy markings (*tilak*) on the upper twelve parts of our bodies. Then we would all sit together for prayers and *kirtan* (singing and chanting the holy names of God) for 2 to 3 hours including the performance of the *ārati* ceremony (greeting the sacred images with offerings of lights, incense, flowers, and such). At sunrise we would finish the *kirtan* with the circumambulation of the holy temple, the holy basil plant (Tulsi Devi), and so forth. Each of us then went off to our own rooms or corners of the temple to do our two to eight hours of private meditation and worship practice (called *bhajan*). Different functions have to be performed by the *sādhus* of any given temple or *āshram*. Some are cooks, pūjārī (the one who serves and worships the images (*thākur*), some buy groceries, some wash the Temple floors, etc. The head of the monastery (the abbot or *mahanta*) and everyone else helped. At 12:00 noon was the first meal or honoring of sacred food (*prasāda*)—foods that had been prepared following specific codes and observances and then offered mystically to the sacred images. After the offerings, all of us partook of the holy remnants, considering them compassionate blessings from our most holy and sweet, loving God.

I want now to recall several different occasions in the company of Baba that show something of his extraordinary attainment. Some of the following incidents occurred before the author of this book, Binod Bihari Dāsji, met Bābā.

One sunny day at about ten in the morning I was sitting outside with some of the other *bābājis* when I saw that Sītānāth dās Bābājī (Baba's personal attendant at that time) was working on a project. I went over to help him. The project was to level the ground where Bābā took his afternoon walks. The pathway was uneven because of large ruts from water erosion. Sītānāth Dādā (older brother) was digging from a nearby available source of dirt to fill in the ruts and even out the walkway. The only problem was that he was digging from a mound of dirt that was used as a trash area where all the used, partially fired clay cups were thrown and broken and the place where the local neighborhood toddlers would pee. Digging and spreading this particularly dirty dirt was an atrocious job. It smelled horrible and had many fired clay fragments mixed in it. When we were done the pathway was raised and even, but smelled of months and maybe years of piss and one could see the broken shards of clay sticking up in many places.

part 2:

Kindly remember that it was a bright, sunny day with no clouds in the sky at all. Sītānāth Dāsī and I went to the local lake, bathed to clean ourselves, and went to honor grace-food, for it was then noon. After that we went outside again to sit for more casual meditation. That was when I observed clouds roll in. The clouds came rolling in and poured down their load of water for a good five minutes. Then, as quickly as they came they left and the sun came out again to shine brilliantly. I realized that the rain had accomplished two things: (1. it smoothed out all the broken shards of fired clay that had been sticking up, and (2. it took away the horrible smell! Over the next few hours before Bābā came out for his walk the ground dried just perfectly such when he walked he walked on a firm, even, sweet-smelling path. This is an example of how nature serves the *siddha-avadhūta-mahātmā*!

On another occasion I noticed that living creatures never harmed Baba. I was at his *kutir* (a small room for private worship) which in this case made of earth. It was just after a rain and large ants were out roaming around for food, etc. They were all around and had the nasty habit of biting people. I found it difficult to sit there with so many of them crawling around me and biting me, but Bābā was unaffected. I thought to myself: "wow, this is difficult for me. I want to see why is Baba so unaffected." One reason simple reason was that he was just not being bitten by them! I watched closely for a long time and noticed that not very many of them would even crawl onto his body, but even then none

of them were biting him. Bābā was a friend to all and was completely cleansed of all traces of worldly qualities. Being saturated with divine love, compassion, and joy, all around him felt it, even the ants! Why would they be any different from the thousands and thousands of other beings who came to Bābā to feel his Illuminated brilliance and be blessed by it?

There is another story about Baba that occurred before I came to live with him. It was witnessed by his long-time attendant Sītānāth Dās Bābājī. One day Sītānāth came around to the *kutir* bringing Bābā his meal of grace-food. He suddenly became frightened and was taken aback. He stood motionlessly and quiet, watching as a deadly cobra climbed up Bābā's body. He watched it as it stayed a while wrapped around Bābā's shoulders and then, in its own time, slithered off and away into the jungle.

Though this next event seems more about myself, it really is not. After months of living in the holy land with Siddha Mauni Bābā (another name of Tinkudi Gosvami) and other *sādhus* and saints, doing private worship eighteen hours a day, I noticed that during the nighttime gathering for the singing of prayers and *kīrtan*, many sacred feelings of love would rise in my heart—and with such intensity that I had to get up, walk over to Bābā and bow at his feet. This happened many times during the period which lasted three to four hours. I felt so grateful to him for what he was giving to me—this divine love rising in my heart. This experience continued for a number of days.

One of my main forms of service for Baba was to be with him alone from about 7:00 am to 11:30 am. My service for him then was to help him with anything he might need during that time. Since he hardly needed anything then I used that time sitting with him for meditation. What I loved to do was keep very quiet and meditate with him, hoping no-one would come for his blessings and bring him out of *samādhi* (meditative trance). He was in *samādhi* most of the time. If he was given five or ten minutes of undisturbed quiet, he would enter into *samādhi* and soon he would start giggling and talking to someone in a voice so sweet only poetry can describe it. He was entering into the sacred time and space of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and interacting with them and the holy cowherd girls. This is the *samādhi* of the *rasik* practitioner—participating in the actual activities of God and his beloved family and friends who are pure loving beings. Among them are the realized *rasik* saints and *siddhas*!

Then perhaps someone might come for his blessings and he would come out of this meditative trance for awhile. But sure enough, within five or ten minutes of their leaving, he was back laughing and talking in transcendent sweetness!

Out of many things I noticed while living with Bābā over the years was his distinctly other-worldly energy—an aura of transcendent love of God—an energy field that extended around and through him. This sacred divine love *sakti* (power) was always consistent—whether he was tired from traveling or refreshed from a recent bath. Whether I was happy with him or felt troubled inside, frustrated with him or angry, whenever it came time to bow at his feet (the standard way of showing respect in the Caitanya tradition) I would experience the same transcendent love-of-God-energy as I had at any other time. His level of illuminated realization was extraordinary. One of the reasons for this was known to be that he was personally and directly blessed by Śrī Rādhā, the veritable Queen of Vraja, the divine love power of *svayam bhagavān* (God himself), Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Another event comes to mind that includes me (sorry!), but that really is about Bābā. Bābā used to smile at me and shake his head with the comment I was a lucky person. He often did this when I went out for the circumambulation or respectful walk around the holy mountain of Govardhan (a fourteen mile walk) and would bring him home very special kinds of grace food from our tradition's famous sacred images from hundreds of miles away! How did I do this? While on the holy walk I would visit with three or four different guru-uncles (guru-brothers of my own blessed *gurudev*), who would always smile at me and bless me. They all loved Bābā very much and one in particular, Śrīmān Satya Hari Bābā, would give me that rare grace-food for me to deliver to his beloved guru-brother—my own Tinkaḍi Bābā! You can imagine what wonderful *sevā* (service) this was for me. Even now, I shiver with great love and feeling as I describe this to you all. Satya Hari Bābā had great love and affection for most everyone he met, but he specially loved my Bābā. For him his love was multiplied to the power of ten.

I remember one day in a particular holy site where we were living. During Bābā's afternoon walk some of us would circumambulate him as a act of showing respect and affection. After doing so I remember standing in front and to the side of him, but quite a ways away from him to observe him and the *sādhus* and devotees who had gathered around him. I was standing there gazing at him when I found myself seeing a

beautiful blue disk over his heart, the heart of my gurudev! I saw this with my naked eyes. It was fascinating and actually ratherunbelievable to me. I found myself rubbing my eyes, opening and closing them, yet disk was still there. I pinched myself several times and yet it was still there. It was visible for three or four minutes. Later, I talked with a guru-brother about it and he said it was a *darsan* (a holy vision) of Kṛṣṇa. It was the sacred manifestation of God in the heart of a realized guru. I consider myself lucky to have seen it.

I remember the first day the author of this book, Binode Bihari dasji, came to see Bābā. He was a very friendly and sincere man; we became friends right away. He commented to me about how happy a person I was and how good it was for me to greet people and make them feel comfortable. I feel he was seeing qualities in me that he possessed himself. He later came to live with Bābā and become one of his personal attendants.

During a specially sacred month that comes each year there are special observances and increased practice for us to do. During this time of year we lived in a particular holy place called Rādhākund (the holy pond of Śrī Rādhā). There Bābā would host great saints like Śrījīv Gosvāmī and practitioner-scholars like Manīndranāth Guha. I remember one year in particular when Manīndranāth Bību gave *pāṭha* (reading and elucidation of the sacred texts). The text he read was called the *Ānandavṛindāvana Campū* ("Blissful Vṛindāvana"). During the afternoon readings Bābā would walk up and down listening and sometimes crying during parts of the reading. At other times he would laugh out and make joyous comments related to the text. It was indeed a special time!

After a number of years Gurudev started getting sick and several disciples from West Bengal came to take him to Jagganath Puri. I followed and stayed with him awhile there and in Bengal. While in Puri I could not help but notice one day Bābā's reaction to a particular man who came to him for spiritual blessings. Bābā exclaimed "Sādhu, Sādhu" and pointed to him. When I looked closer to see to who it was I noticed it was the same person Bābā had said the same thing about years before when he visited him in Vraja. This is the only person I heard Bābā said this about in all the years I was with him. It was extraordinary to me and so this time I made sure to meet him in order to try to understand what Baba was talking about, what Baba meant by *sādhu*. He turned out to be a very gentle, unassuming and honest man, in other words a *sādhu*!

One more thing is worthy of mention during this time. While living in the holy city of Jaggannath Puri I began to get sick. Due to the high salt content in the water I had developed problems digesting and assimilating food. After several weeks of this I became weaker and weaker until it got so ill I lost a lot of weight and could not keep my balance while walking. The blessed *mahānta* (abbot) of the Haridās Ṭhākur Math where we were being hosted, Śrī Nitaipada das Bābājī Mahārāj, was concerned for my life and reported to my *gurudev* that he thought I was dying. As for me, I was in so much bliss all the time that I did not notice how close to death I had come. Bābā called me into his presence and raised his hand in front of me as a blessing. This he held for only one or two minutes. I fell into a state of God-awareness and felt something shift physically inside of me. From that moment I was cured of my physical problems. Although it took a few weeks to gain my strength back, from that moment of his blessing I was cured. I am very thankful for this blessing from him.

There is an understanding that the guru never dies: he is always in the hearts of his disciples. This is a true statement and bears a few comments. A *siddha* guru is skilled and always ready to grace the world through his chosen disciples. He will manifest in different ways and through different avenues, but he is present none the less. Whether he communicates through dreams or is present in dreamtime or manifests directly, it is the disciple who needs to become worthy of such grace. If it is fantasy or even inflated experience, then the ego will prevail and lead the disciple to an unworthy end, but if there is a true, selfless, loving, humble connection with the *siddha* Guru - then there will be grace and spiritual progress for him or her and for everyone they come into contact with. This is the compassionate grace-magic of this powerful tradition.

How can I end this chapter? How can I properly express the qualities of a person so loving, so wise, so completely surrendered to God—in love with God and in loving interaction with God? He was completely and powerfully blessed by God and able to powerfully and completely bless others with the holy name of God. He gave everything to God and his devotees so completely and powerfully that God gave back to him, protected him, took away any inconveniences from his life and showered him with love divine. How can I share him—such a precious jewel—with you, dear readers, in such a way that you too might receive his blessings as I and so many others have? I am always anxious to find ways of doing this. I regard it as the greatest blessing to be able to share him with you. Otherwise, all is for naught. Kindly bless me and forgive

this most personal of confessions.

Appendix C

My Recollections — Mark Tinghino

I did not spend nearly enough time with Bābā while he was on the planet. That was mainly because of my residing in America and only being able to visit India for relatively short periods of time. The first time I met Bābā in January of 1980 he was seated on a mat in his room at our temple in the village of Govardhan, which was dimly lit. The first thing I noticed was that his face was glowing like hot coals and shifting hues from pink to yellow to white to blue. It was not a physical phenomenon with physiological causes. It was an otherworldly glow. Given his reputation as a *siddha bhajanānandī* (accomplished in private worship), I was not amazed by that manifestation. Communication between us was impeded by my lack of fluency in conversational Bengali, which differed in many respects from the medieval period Bengali texts that I had studied up to that point in time. I don't recall any exchange of words between us at that first meeting. If there were, it was very brief. I had made my intentions known upon arrival at the temple, which were to apply for *mantra dīkṣā* from Bābā. This was communicated to him via his other disciples. He was sizing me up as a potential initiate.

I was scolded soon after arriving for making too high a donation to a local Śiva-liṅga temple nearby on my way from New Delhi and for not hiding my camera inside my steel trunk. The *sādhus* were apprehensive, because the dacoits in surrounding villages had spies that would

report back to those criminal enterprises whenever foreign tourists with valuables were seen in the area. It was the first time I had stayed in that remote a region, although I had made daytime excursions there when living in Vrindaban, which is a fairly large settlement (more of a small city than a village).

I was able to converse with some of the Bengali devotees at the temple to some extent, although I wished I was more fluent in modern Bengali. The first evening of my stay at Govardhan was my first experience of the type of *kirtan* practiced by the bābājis. I had taken part in many group *kīrtans* in India, America and Europe throughout the 1970s, but their slightly different agenda was far more intense and entrancing. I would have to attribute that to the many years of practice and the dedicated renunciation of the various participants. Bābā came out of his room when he heard the banging of the clay drums and clanging of the hand cymbals. He stood off to one side smiling and leaning on his wooden staff and enjoying the chanting as he counted his *mantras* on his beads. I was part of a group of Westerners from the post World War II baby boom counterculture who had taken to the *bhakti* movement founded by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the 16th Century. A few of us studied the Sanskrit and Bengali languages and sought to cultivate *rasa* (devotional rapture) via our newfound discipline that included *pūjā* (image worship), *mantra-japa* (repetition of mantras) and *kīrtan* (singing the names and sports of the divine couple). Now I was surrounded by those who had been born into a culture steeped in those traditions and who were some of the foremost *rasikas* (experiencers of *rasa*) of their generation. That made all the difference.

In the several weeks of my living at the temple, Bābā stayed in his room much of the time performing his *bhajan* (private worship), only emerging for short periods of time to meet with visitors in the afternoon or late morning or to listen to the evening *kīrtan* program. I took every opportunity to ask him questions whenever I could. After a few days of sleeping on the dusty temple room floor, I requested for other accommodations to be arranged for me, since I had been suffering from respiratory allergies (a common problem for me in rural India with not only the ubiquitous dust but also with the added cumulative smoke from many wood fires burning in homes and temples for cooking and heating purposes). It is not that the temple room was not swept regularly. It was just the nature of the dry and arid terrain and the rustic construction of the temple, which was not an opulent marble palace like many of the larger Indian temples.

After a few weeks I was summoned to go out with Bābā one afternoon. He mounted a bicycle rikshaw with his wooden staff and I was handed his water pot to carry as I accompanied him on foot. We headed out to a deserted area alongside the hill of Govardhan. The rikshaw driver and I helped Bābā climb down from the carriage. Bābā and I proceeded down a path into a dense thicket of dried brush. Within the thicket was a small one room brick hut that had been hidden from view with a thatched roof with an overhang in front supported by vertical wooden support columns at the two corners that formed a sort of open porch providing shade from the hot desert sun. We sat down under the overhang with our hands on our chanting beads. After several minutes I attempted to make some light conversation regarding the idyllic setting. He then said something to me in Bengali, but I could not follow his dialect. After repeating himself a couple of times with no response from me, he then stood up and pointed to inside the brick hut, indicating that I should enter.

After sitting on the floor of the hut for awhile, I heard a couple other men speaking with Bābā in Bengali. Eventually one of them came to get me, and several people soon arrived for a reading of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* followed by a short *kīrtan*. After we arrived back at the temple, I was informed by Advaita Das Bābājī that Bābā had decided to bestow *dīkṣā* upon me and that I was to make a small donation towards a feast as part of an upcoming festival of seven days' reading of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*. I was then taken into Bābā's room where he had first had me sit on a floor mat and water a *tulasī* plant in a clay pot on the floor. He then recited to me the set of initiation *mantras*, and he had me repeat those out loud. (Although I had received an incomplete set of those *mantras* in a prior initiation, I was finally getting the complete set in the line of succession from Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu).

After the seven day festival of Bhāgavata-saptāha, I went to stay at Keśī Ghāṭ Āśram in Vrindaban, which was headed by the late Kṛṣṇacaraṇ Dās Bābājī. Bābā requested that I come to visit him at our Rādhākuṇḍ temple once a week while staying in Vrindaban, so I purchased a bicycle to make that trip, which was about a two hour ride each way. Bina-pani Biswas, one of the elderly Bengali widows who lived near the Keśī Ghāṭ Āśram always knew where Bābā was traveling. So, I would need to check with her first before heading out. Although he was staying at Rādhākuṇḍ most of the time, he would sometimes move out to another locale in the surrounding countryside. When it was a place to far to reach by bike, I would have to take a bus or horse carriage.

On one of my visits to our Rādhākund temple, I was sitting out in the sunny courtyard on the banks of the famous pond with Bābā. A couple of monkeys were cavorting on a tall tree overhead, and while wrestling with each other they lost their footing and fell on the ground screaming a few feet away from us. The ruckus caused Bābā to slip out of his trance of *japa* meditation, and he looked over at the two monkeys and started laughing. It was infectious, and I had to break out laughing with him, although I had not immediately seen the humor in the situation.

After a few months my three month tourist visa, which I had extended for the customary six-month limit, was almost expired, so I went to stay at our temple in Navadwip, West Bengal. I then had to return to America.

My next trip to India was in December of 1982. I was working on a master's degree at the University of Chicago at the time, so I could only make that trip during the four week winter break between quarters. Bābā was living at the Haridās Math in Puri, Orissa, at the time. It was a two room suite on the upper level, with a small bedroom where Baba slept and a fairly large outer drawing room where I slept on my camping mattress on the floor with a few of Bābā's entourage. The drawing room was also used for Bābā's reception of visitors in the morning and lectures in the afternoon.

Baba at that time was in a very weakened condition due to his declining health. He spent much of his time reclining in his bedroom and chanting. Sometimes he would have several of us gather around his bed and perform *kīrtan*. On that trip I had brought a handheld super 8 millimeter movie camera with me that also had sound recording capability. I filmed Bābā answering questions in his bedroom and a lecture and *kīrtan* in the outer drawing room. Unfortunately, the quality of the cheap microphone that came with the camera left much to be desired, and it is virtually impossible to make out any of the conversation in the segment in Bābā's bedroom. Still, it is a rare record of the life of a renowned figure in Caitanyaism, and hopefully someday we can recover that conversation via sound enhancement.

Although my time with Bābā was brief, they are moments to be treasured. He was engaged in *bhajan* most of the time, which was extremely inspirational to those of us with far less dedication. My own practice was taken to a new level while residing with him. Whenever I asked him about my course of action, such as whether I should finish my formal college education and pursue graduate studies, he would always

say that the most important thing was maintaining the daily *bhajan*, and that as long as that was carried out, everything would be fine.